JAMIL ADRA

UN SIÈCLE DE DISCRIMINATION

La saga des héritiers d'Abdulhamid II

Revue de la presse occidentale, 1920-2000

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NOTE LIMINAIRE

Cette revue de presse est le premier volet d'une série de publications intitulées *« Un siècle de discrimination : la saga des héritiers d'Abdulhamid »*. Elle couvre la période allant de 1920 à l'an 2000. Elle sera suivie par une seconde revue qui traite des articles parus au XXIe siècle.

Les articles qui y figurent ont été publiés principalement par la presse occidentale, francophone et anglophone. Classés par ordre chronologique de parution, ils sont présentés en fac-similé et en texte intégral, simultanément sur la même page, sans aucune altération ou correction orthographique ; la citation de leur référence bibliographique facilite ainsi au lecteur leur accès en ligne.

Parfois pertinents et véridiques, le plus souvent acrimonieux voire cocasses, ils sont compilés pour la première fois sur une si longue période : quatre-vingts ans ! Présentés tels quels, bruts et sans aucun commentaire, ils donnent l'occasion au lecteur d'en dégager la quintessence, à savoir : les enjeux sous-jacents.

Mais d'abord, situons le contexte.

La période qui s'étale du milieu du XIXe siècle jusqu'à nos jours a été dominée par la quête puis le contrôle des sources d'énergie, principalement fossiles : le pétrole. Dès 1889, un personnage avait prématurément [(1)] anticipé ces besoins vitaux et croissants, en faisant l'acquisition de biens immobiliers et de concessions pétrolières et minières : le sultan Abdülhamid II (1842-1918) qui régna sur l'État ottoman pendant 33 ans, de 1876 jusqu'à sa destitution en 1909.

D'abord en tant que jeune prince puis souverain ottoman, il s'est constitué un patrimoine personnel composé de propriétés privées qu'il gérait — personnellement et directement — à travers une administration privée, communément appelée la « Liste civile » [(2)]. Ces biens étaient répartis sur les territoires de l'Empire. Il décède en 1918. Depuis l'ouverture de sa succession (1920), ses ayants droit n'ont jamais cessé de revendiquer leur héritage, en utilisant toutes les voies offertes par la loi.

Le « détournement » de cette « Liste civile » a été la clé essentielle pour les acteurs en présence sur la scène de ce nouvel ordre mondial qui s'établissait à l'issue de la Première Guerre mondiale ; ce fut une des raisons pourquoi elle a fait l'objet de deux articles (n°60 et 65) dans le Traité de paix, dit « traité de Lausanne [(3)] », signé le 24 juillet 1923.

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[1] Le *firman* de « concession de Mossul », daté du 5 Redjeb 1306 AH (7 mars 1889 EC), le *firman* de « concession de Bagdad », du 5 Djemaz-ul-Akher 1316 AH (21 octobre 1898 EC) et le *firman* de confirmation de la « concession de Mossul », du 16 Ramazan 1320 AH (17 décembre 1902 EC).

[2] (ota) خزينهئ خاصّه ou (tr) *Hazîne-i Hâssa*, est une administration privée de gestion du patrimoine du sultan. Elle est communément appelée (fr) « *Liste civile* » ou « *Cassette impériale* », (en) "*Civil List*", "*Privy Purse*", "*Imperial Cassette*", etc. *Cf.* TERZİ (Arzu). "HAZÎNE-i HÂSSA, Osmanlı padişahlarının şahsî gelir ve giderlerini idare eden teşkilât", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. URL : https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hazine-i-hassa.

[3] Le traité de Lausanne est un traité de paix signé le 24 juillet 1923 au Palais de Rumine à Lausanne (Suisse). Dernier traité résultant de la Première Guerre mondiale, il met fin à la Grande Guerre en ce qui concerne l'Empire ottoman. Il précise les frontières de la Turquie issue de l'Empire ottoman et organise des déplacements de populations pour assurer l'homogénéité religieuse à l'intérieur de ses nouvelles frontières.

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Mais qui sont-ils ?

Même si certains articles vont jusqu'à affirmer que « *Huit nations se disputent les 8 milliards du "Sultan rouge* » [(4)], nous pouvons limiter leur nombre à trois : la Grande-Bretagne, principal maitre d'œuvre, et, à moindre échelle, la France et les États-Unis ; ces derniers furent le *tertius gaudens*, le troisième larron qui s'est posé en arbitre au nom du « droit des peuples ». Leur rôle — et leur influence — se reflète pertinemment dans la répartition des parts de la *Turkish Petroleum Company* (rebaptisée *Iraq Petroleum Company*, IPC, en 1929).

Mais d'abord, pour illustrer comment « *l'histoire est faite* », jetons un coup d'œil sur le journal de Maurice Hankey, secrétaire du gouvernement britannique, qui notera le 11 décembre 1920 :

> « Clemenceau [(5)] et Foch ont traversé [la mer] après l'armistice, et on leur a donné une grande réception militaire et publique. Lloyd George [(6)] et Clemenceau ont été conduits à l'ambassade de France... Quand ils furent seuls... Clemenceau dit :
>
> — *Bien. De quoi devons-nous discuter ?*
> — *De la Mésopotamie et de la Palestine*, répondit Lloyd George.
> — *Dites-moi ce que vous voulez*, demanda Clemenceau.
> — *Je veux Mossoul*, dit Lloyd George.
> — *Vous l'aurez*, a dit Clemenceau. *Rien d'autre ?*
> — *Si, je veux aussi Jérusalem*, a continué Lloyd George.
> — *Vous l'aurez*, a dit Clemenceau,
> — *Mais Pichon* [(7)] *fera des difficultés pour Mossoul*.
>
> Il n'y a absolument aucune trace écrite ou mémorandum fait sur le moment (...). Cependant, en dépit de grandes pressions de la part de ses collègues et de toutes sortes de parties concernées, Clemenceau, qui a toujours été inflexible, ne revint jamais sur sa parole et je suis bien placé pour dire que Lloyd George ne lui en a jamais laissé l'occasion. **C'est ainsi que l'histoire est faite** [(8)]. »[(9)]

Voilà la scène de théâtre dressée. Observons les acteurs évoluer à travers cette revue de presse.

Bonne lecture,

JAMIL ADRA
Paris, 10 février 2020

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[4] GEORG (Manfred), «Huit nations se disputent les 8 milliards du "Sultan rouge" (p.3) », *Paris-soir*, Paris, édition 14 septembre 1937 (15e année, N°5191, ED6), sect. *Dernières nouvelles*, 14 septembre 1937. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7643084k. p. 1 et 3.
[5] Homme d'État français, Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929) est le président du Conseil de 1906 à 1909 puis de 1917 à 1920.
[6] Homme d'État britannique, David Lloyd George (1863-1945) est le Premier ministre du Royaume-Uni du 7 décembre 1916 au 22 octobre 1922, supervisant la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale.
[7] Stephen Jean Marie Pichon (1857-1933) est le ministre des Affaires étrangères sous plusieurs gouvernements de la Troisième République entre 1906 et 1920.
[8] ROSKILL (Stephen), Hankey, *Man of Secrets*, Collins, Londres, vol. II, 1972, pp. 28-29.
[9] LAURENS (Henry), « Comment l'Empire ottoman fut dépecé », *Le Monde diplomatique*, Paris, France, édition Avril 2003, sect. Les ravages d'une guerre arbitraire, avril 2003. URL : https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2003/04/LAURENS/10102. p. 16-17.

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1908-05-15 : Ultimatum du Comité « Union et Progrès » à Abdul-Hamid

Ultimatum du Comité « Union et Progrès » à Abdul-Hamid

Nous donnons ci-après le texte de la dernière requête que le Comité Union et Progrès avait adressée au sultan vers le 15 mai 1908 :

« Nous soumettons ce qui suit à votre haute appréciation impériale. Le Comité Union et Progrès n'a aucune rancune ou animosité particulière à l'égard de S. M. le Sultan. Nous n'avons qu'un grief, et c'est S. M. elle-même qui en a hautement stigmatisé la cause, lorsque, dans son discours du Trône du 7 Zilhidjé 1293, Elle dénonçait « les inconvénients et les abus qui sont les conséquences fatales du gouvernement despotique d'une seule personne ou d'un groupe restreint ». Pour ce qui est de notre idéal, la Constitution, c'est vous-même encore qui, dans le même discours, vous étiez plu à le louer en ces termes : « Le texte de la Constitution est conforme à l'esprit du khalifat, aux droits de l'empire, et aux principes de liberté et d'égalité des citoyens ottomans. La responsabilité et les prérogatives, les droits intangibles de l'Assemblée nationale, l'indépendance complète des tribunaux, le contrôle des dépenses publiques, la nécessité d'admettre un système de décentralisation administrative dans les provinces de l'empire tout en sauvegardant les droits du pouvoir central, tout cela est bien compris dans le texte de la Constitution et on ne peut plus conforme au "Chéri'", aux besoins du pays et aux aptitudes de la nation ». L'idéal du Comité est donc de revoir la remise en pratique de la Constitution que vous avez vous-même appréciée et louée de cette façon. Pour arriver à son but sacré, noire Comité est prêt à se soumettre à tous les sacrifices, et c'est dans ce but qu'il a réalisé l'union des différents partis ottomans. Soyez bien persuadé que toute la Nation est solidaire avec nous pour l'accomplissement de cette idée et de ce vœu commun.

La suite logique des faits amène forcément cette conclusion que si Votre Majesté persiste, à accueillir les conseils des traîtres el les fausses informations des courtisans intéressés qui ne cessent de vous tromper sciemment sous couleur de vous témoigner leur fidélité, et si les écoutant vous retardez encore la réouverture du Parlement, tout tend à démontrer qu'il y aura, effusion de sang et que la famille impériale sera exposée elle-même aux plus grands dangers.

Nous répugnons certes à l'effusion du sang. Mais si le vœu général de la nation est méconnu, le sang qui serait alors répandu ne sera pas sûrement cette fois inutile à la nation comme celui versé au Yémen, en Crète et en Roumélie, dans ces derniers temps. Pourtant, chaque goutte du sang des citoyens, — qui est le sang sacré de l'Islam, — nous est quand même précieuse !

Et c'est de Votre Majesté qu'il dépend d'empêcher l'effusion d'un tel sang. Et pour ce faire il n'existe qu'un seul moyen : la réapplication de la Constitution.

Le Comité Union et Progrès n'a jamais séparé les intérêts de la famille impériale de ceux de la nation. Nous sommes intimement convaincus que l'application de la Constitution, loin de jamais porter ni matériellement ni moralement la moindre atteinte à vos droits de souveraineté ni à votre dignité, serait tout au contraire un point d'appui pour le trône impérial.

II

Ultimatum du Comité "Union et Progrès" à ABDUL-HAMID

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ni à votre dignité, serait tout au contraire un point d'appui pour le trône impérial.

Il est hors de contesté que surtout en ce moment le pouvoir suprême, appuyé par le pays tout entier, réaliserait une force considérable au profit du gouvernement, seule force capable de donner la vie à la nation.

Le Comité Union et Progrès déclare que s'il n'obtient aucun effet pratique de cette deuxième supplique, toute la responsabilité de la révolution avec ses conséquences et l'effusion du sang retombera pleine et entière sur le gouvernement actuel.

En foi de ce qui précède, il ressort nettement que toute appréciation et décision appartiennent à S. M. le Sultan, seul et unique responsable des destinées de l'empire.

Cachet du : Centre général,
Extérieur du Comité Union et Progrès.

30 avril 1324-1908.
12 *Rébi-ul-Ahir* 1325 (*Hégire*).

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« Ultimatum du Comité “Union et Progrès” à Abdul-Hamid », *Correspondance d’Orient : revue bimensuelle de politique étrangère* / directeur : Dr Georges Samné (mai 1910). Bibliothèque nationale de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5805930q/f31.image. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5805930q. Pages 427-428.

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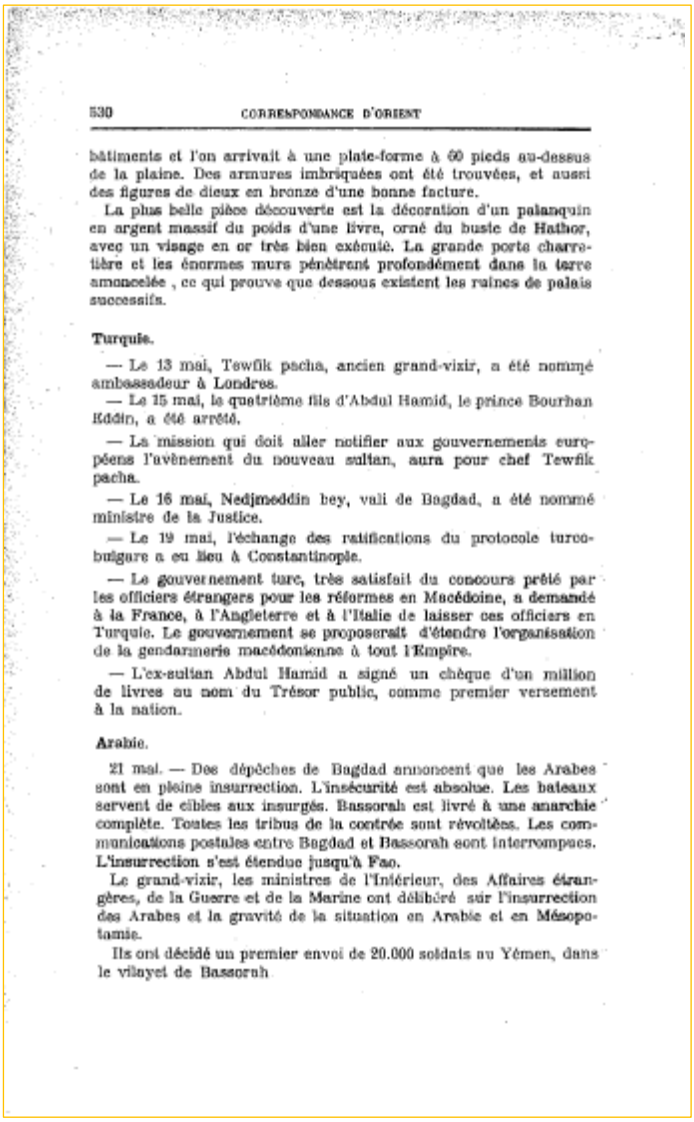
1909-06-01: Turquie

Turquie

L'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid a signé un chèque d'un million de livres au nom du Trésor public, comme premier versement à la nation.



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bâtiments et l'on arrivait à une plate-forme à 60 pieds au-dessus de la plaine. Des armures imbriquées ont été trouvées, et aussi des figures de dieux en bronze d'une bonne facture.

La plus belle pièce découverte est la décoration d'un palanquin en argent massif du poids d'une livre, orné du buste de Hathor, avec un visage en or très bien exécuté. La grande porte charretière et les énormes murs pénètrent profondément dans la terre amoncelée, ce qui prouve que dessous existent les ruines de palais successifs.

Turquie.

— Le 13 mai, Tewfik pacha, ancien grand-vizir, a été nommé ambassadeur à Londres.

— Le 15 mai, le quatrième fils d'Abdul Hamid, le prince Bourhan Eddin, a été arrêté.

— La mission qui doit aller notifier aux gouvernements européens l'avènement du nouveau sultan, aura pour chef Tewfik pacha.

— Le 16 mai, Nedjmeddin bey, vali de Bagdad, a été nommé ministre de la Justice.

— Le 19 mai, l'échange des ratifications du protocole turco-bulgare a eu lieu à Constantinople.

— Le gouvernement turc, très satisfait du concours prêté par les officiers étrangers pour les réformes en Macédoine, a demandé à la France, à l'Angleterre et à l'Italie de laisser ces officiers en Turquie. Le gouvernement se proposerait d'étendre l'organisation de la gendarmerie macédonienne à tout l'Empire.

— L'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid a signé un chèque d'un million de livres au nom du Trésor public, comme premier versement à la nation.

Arabie.

21 mai. — Des dépêches de Bagdad annoncent que les Arabes sont en pleine insurrection. L'insécurité est absolue. Les bateaux servent de cibles aux insurgés. Bassorah est livré à une anarchie complète. Toutes les tribus de la contrée sont révoltées. Les communications postales entre Bagdad et Bassorah sont interrompues. L'insurrection s'est étendue jusqu'à Fao.

Le grand-vizir, les ministres de l'Intérieur, des Affaires étrangères, de la Guerre et de la Marine ont délibéré sur l'insurrection des Arabes et la gravité de la situation en Arabie et en Mésopotamie.

Ils ont décidé un premier envoi de 20.000 soldats au Yémen, dans le vilayet de Bassorah.

« L'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid a signé un chèque d'un million de livres... », Correspondance d'Orient : revue économique, politique & littéraire / directeurs : Chekri-Ganem, Dr Georges Samné, n° 17, 2e Année, 1er juin 1909 (juin 1909). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k58120566. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k58120566. Consulté le 25 février 2020, p. 530.

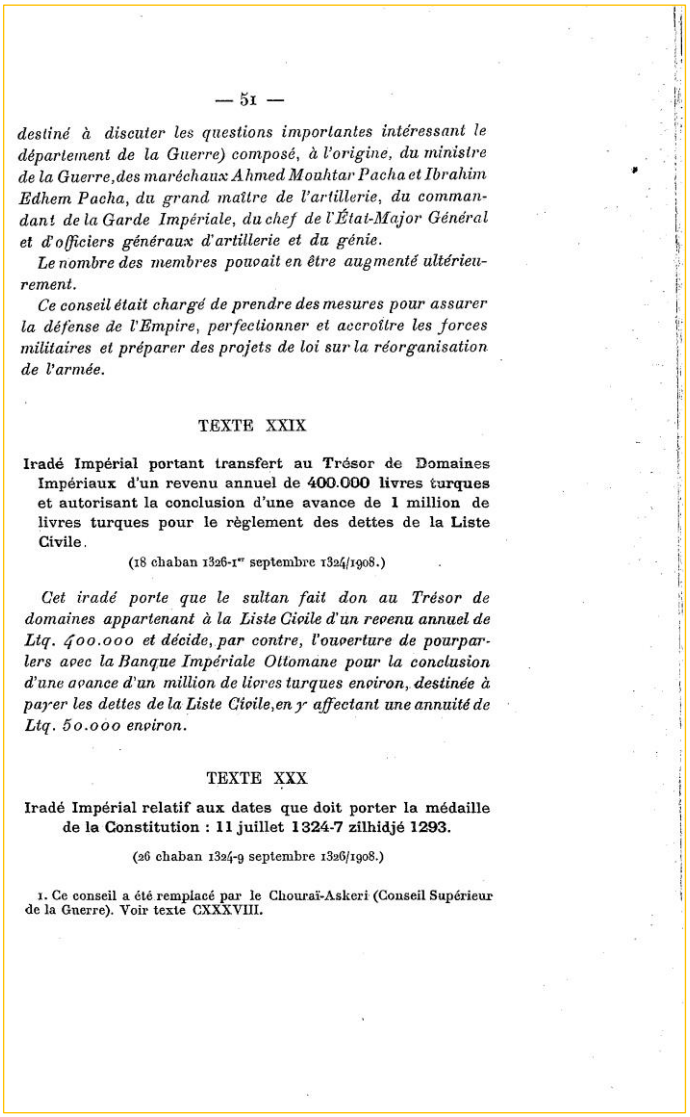
JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1908-09-14 : Iradé Impérial portant transfert au Trésor de Domaines Impériaux

Iradé Impérial portant transfert au Trésor de Domaines Impériaux d'un revenu annuel de 400.000 livres turques et autorisant la conclusion d'une avance de 1 million de livres turques pour le règlement des dettes de la Liste Civile.

(18 chaban 1326 – 1er septembre 1324/1908.)

Cet iradé porte que le sultan fait don au Trésor de domaines appartenant à la Liste Civile d'un revenu annuel de Ltq. 400.000 et décide, par contre, l'ouverture de pourparlers avec la Banque Impériale Ottomane pour la conclusion d'une avance d'un million de livres turques environ, destinée à payer les dettes de la Liste Civile, en y affectant une annuité de Ltq. 50.000 environ.



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destiné à discuter les questions importantes intéressant le département de la Guerre) composé, à l'origine, du ministre de la Guerre, des maréchaux Ahmed Mouhtar Pacha et Ibrahim Edhem Pacha, du grand maître de l'artillerie, du commandant de la Garde Impériale, du chef de l'État-Major Général et d'officiers généraux d'artillerie et du génie.

Le nombre des membres pouvait en être augmenté ultérieurement.

Ce conseil était chargé de prendre des mesures pour assurer la défense de l'Empire, perfectionner et accroître les forces militaires et préparer des projets de loi sur la réorganisation de l'armée.

TEXTE XXIX

Iradé Impérial portant transfert au Trésor de Domaines Impériaux d'un revenu annuel de 400.000 livres turques et autorisant la conclusion d'une avance de 1 million de livres turques pour le règlement des dettes de la Liste Civile.

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TEXTE XXX

Iradé Impérial relatif aux dates que doit porter la médaille de la Constitution : 11 juillet 1324-7 zilhidjé 1293.

(26 chaban 1324-9 septembre 1326/1908.)

1. Ce conseil a été remplacé par le Chouraï-Askeri (Conseil Supérieur de la Guerre). Voir texte CXXXVIII.

BILIOTTI (Jean-Henri-Abdolonyme) et SEDAD (Ahmed), « Iradé Impérial portant transfert au Trésor de Domaines Impériaux d'un revenu annuel de 400.000 livres turques et autorisant la conclusion d'une avance de 1 million de livres turques pour le règlement des dettes de la Liste Civile. (TEXTE XXIX), (18 chaban 1326 – 1er septembre 1324/1908.) », dans *Législation ottomane depuis le rétablissement de la constitution, 24 djemazi-ul-ahir 1326-10 juillet 1324/1908, recueil des lois, décrets, règlements, conventions, actes internationaux, etc., etc.,... de l'Empire ottoman*. Tome Ier. Du 24 djemazi-ul-ahir 1326-10 juillet 1324/1908 au 1er zilcadé 1327-1er novembre 1325/1909, 1912e éd., Paris, France, 1912. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Droit, économie, politique, 8-F-23440, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb318168284, ark:/12148/bpt6k61517810. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k61517810. Consulté le 28 janvier 2020, p. 51.

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1922-11-30: Turkey's Envoys Bolt Peace Meet

TURKEY'S ENVOYS BOLT PEACE MEET

Mohammedan Delegates to Lausanne Conference Quit Commission.

LAUSANNE. Nov. 29. (By I. N. S.) Angered by the Allies' new plans for demilitarization of the Aegean islands, the Turks withdrew this afternoon from the sub-commission for the near east peace conference dealing with the future status of inlands off the Turkish coast. The Turks demanded sovereignty over the islands, claiming that Greece, might attempt to use them as war base.

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"Turkey's Envoys Bolt Peace Meet". *South Bend news-times*, November 30, 1922, Morning Edition, page 16. URL: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87055779/1922-11-30/ed-1/seq-16/

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1922-12-01: La Question Turque ou la lutte des impérialismes en Turquie

En outre, de nouvelles réclamations émanant d'un autre groupe américain se faisaient jour — dès la Conférence de Gênes — à propos de droits possédés tant sur des mines de lignites aux Dardanelles, que sur des terrains pétroliers dans les vilayets de Bagdad et de Mossoul, ayant appartenu, à la liste civile de l'ancien Sultan Abdul-Hamid.

Voici que le New-York Times disait récemment à ce propos - (reproduit par le *Courrier des Pétroles* du 9 décembre).

Le sultan Abdul-Hamid avait acquis d'immenses terrains agricoles. À sa mort, il en possédait des millions d'acres en Asie Mineure, en Trace, en Mésopotamie et en Afrique.

Ces terrains étaient sa propriété personnelle, pour laquelle il payait au gouvernement ottoman des impôts. Le revenu qu'il en retirait annuellement s'élevait à £ 1.500.000. Dans ce lot formidable de terrains, il s'en trouvait dont le sous-sol recelait des gîtes pétrolifères qui ne furent jamais mis en valeur. Or, la plupart des champs pétrolifères revendiqués se trouvent compris dans les régions sur lesquelles les nations alliées prétendent posséder des droits.

Après la mort d'Abdul-Hamid, ses locataires cessèrent de payer leur fermage, sauf ceux de la région de Constantinople, qui continuèrent à les payer régulièrement aux héritiers.

Le major John Goldolphin Benett, qui se trouve actuellement à Lausanne, fit en 1918 un accord avec 22 de ces héritiers par lequel leurs droits seraient transférés à un syndicat qu'il formerait.

Le gouvernement britannique abandonne aujourd'hui sa thèse, au nom de laquelle il invoquait des droits sur une option qu'il détenait d'Abdul-Hamid, sur les terrains appartenant à ce dernier, et la Standard Oil Co, de son côté, après avoir fait des démarches répétées mais infructueuses, a suggéré au gouvernement américain de réclamer avec insistance le régime de la « porte ouverte » dans l'Irak pour toutes les nations. De cette façon, la Standard serait fortement aidée dans les efforts qu'elle fait pour évincer les héritiers légitimes de leurs droits.

La Standard Oil, cependant, a publié un démenti officiel à ces allégations. Elle est, en effet, en faveur de la « porte ouverte » en Mésopotamie, mais à condition que ce régime s'applique sans distinction à tous les intérêts américains. Et elle ne tente nullement d'accaparer ici ou là aucuns droits légaux détenus par autrui.

M. Irwin Untermeyer, l'avocat américain, ancien attorney général de New-York, qui se rend à Lausanne, a l'intention d'y faire valoir les droits des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid (22 princes et princesses turcs), dont les intérêts dans les gisements pétrolifères en Mésopotamie ont été transférés au capitaine John Bennett, ancien attaché h l'ambassade britannique à Constantinople. La Standard Oil Co, qui avait été mise en cause a fait aujourd'hui une déclaration démentant catégoriquement l'accusation portée contre elle de vouloir déposséder des héritiers d'Abd-Ul-Hamid. La Compagnie fournit à ce sujet les détails suivants :

« Au cours de l'été dernier, un avocat américain avait demandé aux représentants de la Compagnie si

3e Année. — N° 10 Le N° : UN Franc Décembre 1922

Les Documents Politiques

DIRECTEUR : M. R. MENNEVÉE

DIPLOMATIQUES ET FINANCIERS

N° consacré à

La Question Turque

ET

LA LUTTE des Impérialismes Internationaux EN TURQUIE

Direction et Administration à PARIS, 20, RUE DE GRAMMONT (2e)

Téléphone : GUTENBERG 21-18

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éventuellement elle s'intéresserait au rachat des intérêts dans les gisements pétrolifères appartenant aux héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid. On répondit alors à cet avocat que si les héritiers avaient des droits réels, la Compagnie discuterait volontiers la question ; mais, depuis lors, elle n'en a jamais entendu parler.

La Standard Oil Cie n'a jamais reconnu la validité de ces droits, et n'a rien fait pour vérifier ni les droits, ni les déclarations des personnes se prétendant bien au courant du fait que l'ancien sultan s'était approprié, pour son bénéfice personnel, des propriétés appartenant en réalité à l'État turc.

Mais la chose était bientôt mise au point par l'Agence Télégraphique Universelle (de Paris) qui, dans sa, feuille du 11 décembre publiait sous le titre : « Mossoul et Bagdad » les dessous d'une histoire de pétrole, la très intéressante information suivante :

Les journaux du 4 courant, ont publié un câblogramme de New-York, annonçant que plusieurs Américains et Anglais fournissent, de l'argent à vingt-deux princes et princesses turcs qui, comme héritiers du sultan Abdul-Hamid, réclament des terrains pétrolifères situés en Mésopotamie, d'une valeur dépassant un milliard de dollars. Ces terrains pétrolifères appartenaient, dit-on, à Abdul-Hamid, qui payait au gouvernement turc des impôts pour ces terrains avec l'argent de sa cassette personnelle.

La dépêche ajoutait que M. Untermeyer, homme de loi américain, venait de partir pour l'Europe, afin d'aller à Lausanne, faire valoir les droits des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid ; que le commandant Bennett, ancien attaché britannique à l'ambassade de Constantinople, représentait déjà à Lausanne les héritiers en question, et que c'était, lui qui avait réclamé la coopération de M. Untermeyer.

À la suite des détails donnés dans la presse du monde entier sur cette affaire, la Standard Oil, mise en cause, croit devoir faire une déclaration démentant catégoriquement l'accusation portée contre elle de vouloir déposséder les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid ; elle affirmait n'avoir jamais reconnu la validité de leurs droits et n'avoir rien fait pour les vérifier ; d'ailleurs elle ne cherche nullement à acquérir des droits en Mésopotamie ou ailleurs, qui sont la propriété légale d'autrui.

En réalité, il s'agit d'un conflit entre la Standard Oil et les prétendus représentants des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid ; on ne peut nous opposer la moindre dénégation quand nous affirmons qu'il existe un contrat, que ce contrat a été tiré à 23 exemplaires, sur papier grand format, et en trois langues, turc, français et anglais, le français faisant foi en cas de contestation. Le fait nous était déjà connu en juin dernier.

Les tractations ont été menées par John Goldolphin Bennett, 25, Panmuir Road, à Londres, S. W. 20, ex-officier supérieur de l'« Intelligence Corps » de Constantinople; le lieutenant-colonel George Maitland Edwards, 1, Lloane Avenue, S. W., Londres, tous deux hommes de Lloyd George et de lord Curzon ; l'affaire englobait d'abord toute la succession d'Abdul-Hamid ; vu l'opposition d'Angora, arguant que ces propriétés étaient biens d'État, l'affaire fut limitée à la partie des biens situés hors des frontières du Pacte National, principalement à ceux situés dans les anciens vilayets de Bagdad, Mossoul et Syrie.

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— 300 —

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valoir sur ses participations, 25.000 livres turques.

Avaient signé, en juin, les princes Abdul-Kadir et Ahmed Nourreddin, ainsi que la sultane Naime ; les princes Selim, Burhaneddin, Abdul Rahim, Mehmed Abid, représenté par Selim en raison de son excessive surdité, les sultanes Zekie, Naile, Chadié, Ayche et Réfié avaient refusé de signer.

Pour de moindres parts, sont également participantes cinq sultanes, ex-épouses d'Abdul-Hamid ; aucune n'avait consenti à signer.

Le prince sur lequel on compte pour déterminer les abstentionnistes est le prince Burhaneddin, fils préféré d'Abdul-Hamid, qui se trouve à Monaco, et qui a été très travaillé par MM. Bennet et Edwards.

Alors que l'on estime à 1 milliard de dollars la valeur des terrains pétrolifères, les acheteurs éventuels parlaient seulement de 20 millions de livres turques.

Il ressort du contrat que les intermédiaires anglais, désignés plus haut, s'attribuent une commission de 20%.

D'après les contrats, cinq sociétés seraient créées : trois sociétés anglo-ottomanes, pour l'exploitation des propriétés immobilières, pour l'exploitation des pétroles de Bagdad, Mossoul, Syrie, pour l'exploitation des autres mines et concessions, une société anglo-américaine pour l'exploitation des propriétés immobilières, et enfin, une société américaine, formée par des groupes anglo-américains, au capital de 150 millions de dollars, destinée à financer les trois premières, et pour la constitution de laquelle on demandait deux mois.

D'une façon générale, les princes et les princesses abstentionnistes sont hostiles, aux Anglais et assez bien disposés envers les Américains ; tous préféreraient traiter avec des Français.

Il est exact que John Bennet, actuellement à Lausanne, ait appelé à la rescousse Irwin Untermeyer ; celui-ci accuse la Standard Oil d'essayer, avec l'aide du gouvernement américain, de dépouiller ses clients ; on sait que la Standard Oil oppose un démenti à ces déclarations.

C'est la lutte pour le pétrole qui continue : Le groupe *Standard Oil-Standard Franco-Américaine* veut, avec raison, empêcher la mainmise, par un groupe d'aventuriers, sur des biens immenses qu'ils cherchent à acquérir pour une bouchée de pain. Untermeyer, qui se pose en défenseur des héritiers, est l'homme qui, avec John Bennet, cherche en réalité à les dépouiller. Laisser leur combinaison réussir serait marcher contre les intérêts de la Turquie en même temps que contre ceux de la France. Pourquoi, à Lausanne, ne demande-t-on pas la lecture du fameux contrat ?

À côté d'appétits voraces d'un groupe d'intermédiaires anglais, il faut voir là une phase de la lutte entre la *Standard Oil* et le groupe *Royal Dutch Shell*.

Nous sommes loin de reconnaître — comme notre confrère — les bonnes liaisons qui autorisent la *Standard Oil* à éliminer la concurrence dans ses tentatives de domination économique, demi-nation qu'elle ne craint pas d'afficher en avouant que « la Standard Oil n'a jamais reconnu la valeur de ces droits » (des héritiers d'Abd-Ul-Hamid).

Et pour nous qui combattons tous les impérialismes, ce

— 301 —

trat, que ce contrat a été tiré à 23 exemplaires, sur papier grand format, et en trois langues, turc, français et anglais, le français faisant foi en cas de contestation. Le fait nous était déjà connu en juin dernier.

Les tractations ont été menées par John Goldolphin Bennett, 25, Panmuir Road, à Londres, S. W. 20, ex-officier supérieur de l' « Intéligence Corps » de Constantinople; le lieutenant-colonel George Maitland Edwards, 1, Lloane Avenue, S. W., Londres, tous deux hommes de Lloyd George et de lord Curzon ; l'affaire englobait d'abord toute la succession d'Abdul-Hamid ; vu l'opposition d'Angora, arguant que ces propriétés étaient biens d'État, l'affaire fut limitée à la partie des biens situés hors des frontières du Pacte National, principalement à ceux situés dans les anciens vilayets de Bagdad, Mossoul et Syrie.

Chaque signataire devait recevoir, lors de la signature, et à valoir sur ses participations, 25.000 livres turques.

Avaient signé, en juin, les princes Abdul-Kadir et Ahmed Nourreddin, ainsi que la sultane Naime ; les princes Selim, Burhaneddin, Abdul Rahim, Mehmed Abid, représenté par Selim en raison de son excessive surdité, les sultanes Zekie, Naile, Chadié, Ayche et Réfié avaient refusé de signer.

Pour de moindres parts, sont également participantes cinq sultanes, ex-épouses d'Abdul-Hamid ; aucune n'avait consenti à signer.

Le prince sur lequel on compte pour déterminer les abstentionnistes est le prince Burhaneddin, fils préféré d'Abdul-Hamid, qui se trouve à Monaco, et qui a été très travaillé par MM. Bennet et Edwards.

Alors que l'on estime à 1 milliard de dollars la valeur des terrains pétrolifères, les acheteurs éventuels parlaient seulement de 20 millions de livres turques.

Il ressort du contrat que les intermédiaires anglais, désignés plus haut, s'attribuent une commission de 20 %.

D'après les contrats, cinq sociétés seraient créées : trois sociétés anglo-ottomanes, pour l'exploitation des propriétés immobilières, pour l'exploitation des pétroles de Bagdad, Mossoul, Syrie, pour l'exploitation des autres mines et concessions, une société anglo-américaine pour l'exploitation des propriétés immobilières, et, enfin, une société américaine, formée par des groupes anglo-américains, au capital de 150 millions de dollars, destinée à financer les trois premières, et pour la constitution de laquelle on demandait deux mois.

D'une façon générale, les princes et les princesses abstentionnistes sont hostiles aux Anglais et assez bien disposés envers les Américains ; tous préféreraient traiter avec des Français.

Il est exact que John Bennet, actuellement à Lausanne, ait appelé à la rescousse Irwin Untermeyer ; celui-ci accuse la *Standard Oil* d'essayer, avec l'aide du gouvernement américain, de dépouiller ses clients ; on sait que la *Standard Oil* oppose un démenti à ces déclarations.

C'est la lutte pour le pétrole qui continue : Le groupe *Standard Oil-Standard Franco-Américaine* veut, avec raison, empêcher la main-mise, par un groupe d'aventuriers, sur des biens immenses qu'ils cherchent à acquérir pour une bouchée de pain. Untermeyer, qui se pose en défenseur des héritiers, est l'homme qui, avec John Bennet, cherche en réalité à les dépouiller. Laisser leur combinaison réussir serait marcher contre les intérêts de la Turquie en même temps que contre ceux de la France. Pourquoi, à Lausanne, ne demande-t-on pas la lecture du fameux contrat ?

A côté d'appétits voraces d'un groupe d'intermédiaires anglais, il faut voir là une phase de la lutte entre la *Standard Oil* et le groupe *Royal Dutch Shell*.

Nous sommes loin de reconnaître — comme notre confrère — les bonnes raisons qui autorisent la *Standard Oil* à éliminer la concurrence dans ses tentatives de domination économique, domination qu'elle ne craint pas d'afficher en avouant que « la *Standard Oil* n'a « jamais reconnu la valeur de ces droits » (des héritiers d'Abd-Ul-Hamid).

Et pour nous qui combattons tous les impérialismes, ce n'est pas un intérêt tout particulier que nous constatons que ce soi-disant grand principe de « libre-concurrence » si hautement réclamé par l'oligarchie américaine a par une coïncidence curieuse, la même limite que les intérêts mêmes de cette oligarchie.

Et c'est en vain que le Cabinet de Washington cherche à dissimuler les liens étroits qui l'unissent à la *Standard Oil*.

M. Pierre l'Espagnol de la Tramerye dans son livre *La lutte mondiale pour le pétrole*, déjà cité — et que nous avons tout lieu de croire quelque peu inspiré par la *Standard Oil* elle-même — ne disait-il pas :

— Elle (la *Standard Oil*) « le plie (le « Gouvernement des Etats-Unis) docilement à ses volontés. Bien mieux, le « président Harding appuie énergiquement ses revendications à travers le « monde, *Qui s'attaque à la* Standard « *s'attaque au gouvernement Fédéral lui-même* (1) ».

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« N° consacré à la Question Turque et la lutte des Impérialismes Internationaux en Turquie », Les Documents politiques, diplomatiques et financiers, 3e année, Décembre 1922, n° 10 (décembre 1922). Bibliothèque nationale de France. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5422880x. Consulté le 30 janvier 2020, p. 300-306.

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1922-12-02: To Fight For Billion and Rich Oil Lands For Sultan's Heirs

TO FIGHT FOR BILLION AND RICH OIL LANDS FOR SULTAN'S HEIRS

Alvin Untermyer Sails Today to Press Claims of 22 Princess and Princesses.

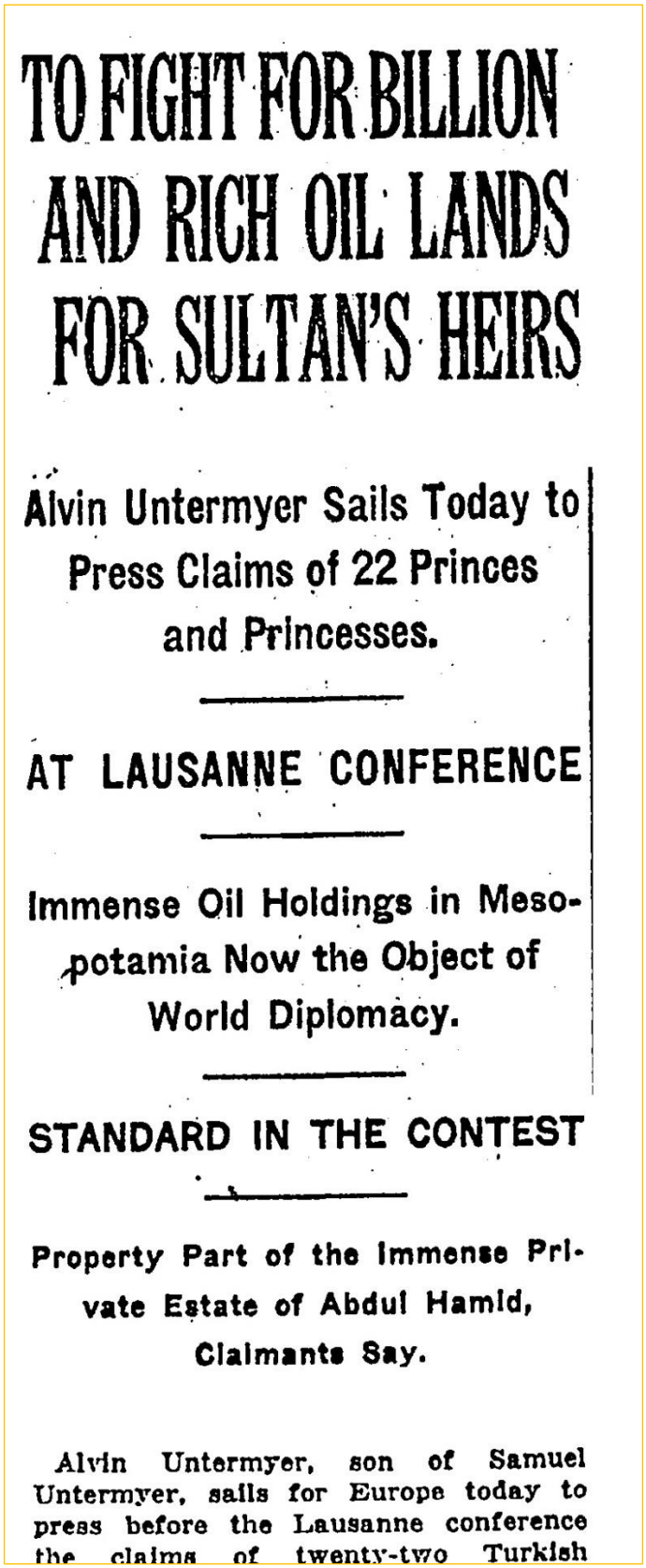
AT LAUSANNE CONFERENCE

Immense Oil Holdings In Mesopotamia Now the Object of World Diplomacy.

STANDARD IN THE CONTEST

Property Part of the Immense Private Estate of Abdul Hamid, Claimants Say.

Alvin Untermyer, son of Samuel Untermyer, sails for Europe today to press before the Lausanne conference the claims of twenty-two Turkish



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Princes and Princesses for Mesopotamian oil fields alleged to be worth more than $1,000,000,000.

Mr. Untermyer will represent his father and other American and British citizens who are financing eighteen of the twenty-two heirs of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid. The claim is that most of the oil fields now the object of world diplomacy are owned by them in fee simple by inheritance from Sultan Abdul Hamid, who died in 1915. They contend that the Sultan bought the property from funds from his personal estate, paid taxes on it to the Turkish Government, and was the personal owner with a title as good as any person could have for real property.

Hamid was deposed and driven out of power by the Young Turks, but this, it is alleged, did not impair his title to the property nor the right of his heirs to inherit it.

Major John Godolphin Bennett, who is mentioned in dispatches from Lausanne, is the representative of eighteen of the Turkish heirs. Samuel Untermyer on his recent trip abroad became interested, it was learned yesterday, with Major Bennett in the affairs of the Turkish heirs. Arrangements were made to furnish the capital which was necessary to provide immediate income for some of the heirs, to pay the taxes on their property and to defray the

legal expenses in connection with it. Lieut. Col. T. Maitland Edwards is said to be one of the British citizens interested.

Fighting Oil Companies.

The chief legal expenses, it is alleged, are incurred in fighting the alleged efforts of the Standard Oil Company and other oil companies to capture rights in these properties and to make good the title of the heirs against claims put forward by English and other interests.

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The oil fields owned by the Sultan and claimed by his heirs are alleged to contain more oil than all the fields in America and Mexico, so that the thing at stake is not merely the fortune of individuals but, to some extent, the future of nations.

Mr. Untermyer was shown yesterday a dispatch in The New York Times from Lausanne containing an interview with John W. De Kay, in which Major Bennett is referred to as the secretary of Mr. De Kay, and is quoted as saying that former Postmaster General Hays and Samuel Untermyer were to sail from New York today and to make their appearance at Lausanne. The statement of Mr. Untermyer is as follows:

"The message is confused and unintelligible. Major Bennett is not secretary to Mr. De Kay. He is an Englishman who has for many years Military Attaché to the British Embassy at Constantinople, and is now representing the Turkish princes and princesses who are the heirs of the deceased Sultan Abdul Hamid and who claim, as such heirs the title of vast oil, mineral and agricultural lands in Syria, Thrace, Greece Tripoli, Palestine, Mesopotamia and other countries, including the vast oil fields of Mesopotamia that are the subject of so much diplomatic rivalry.

"When I was in Europe last Summer Major Bennett and Captain Edwards, representing these Turkish interests, retained me to act for those interests. My son, Alvin Untermyer, is leaving tomorrow for Lausanne for that purpose.

"I know nothing about the story that Will Hays is about to go abroad, except that I know he is not going with my son or in connection with this business."

Will H. Hays was not in this city yesterday. His secretary, Ralph Hays said:

"Mr. Hays is not sailing to Europe tomorrow, and I don't think he plans to sail there at all. I am sure that he is not personally interested in any way in the Mesopotomian oil question. It is barely possible that his law firm is connected with it in some way. Mr. Hays is today in Indiana."

When Abdul Hamid died in 1915, it was said that he was the richest man in the world. His main productive wealth was agricultural, and his greatest potential wealth was oil. Oil fields described as the most valuable in the world exist on his private estate.

The principal part of the known oil properties, which have figured so largely in the diplomacy of the last few years under the name of the "Mesopotamia oil fields," were bought by the former Sultan in his lifetime. His ownership under these conditions is alleged to have blocked the efforts of the Standard Oil Company and British companies to get a foothold there. Whatever company obtains the right to drill for oil in these fields, it is asserted, will have to settle first with the heirs of the old Sultan.

The alleged efforts of the Standard Oil Company to enter these fields through diplomacy have been under attack for several years. In the last part of the Administration of President Wilson, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby was active in demanding fair play for Americans in the Mesopotamian oil fields.

This policy is alleged to have been followed up actively by the present Administration. The position alleged to have been taken by the State Department at Washington is that the liberation of Mesopotamia from the Turkish control automatically killed all the Sultan's real estate titles in that region.

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Continued on Page Six.

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The future of the oil property may depend on whether the Turkish Government now succeeds in recovering the Mosul territory now administered under a British mandate.

Importance of Concession.

No ordinary concession is at stake. Governments are deeply interested because oil is expected in the present century to play the part in the rise and fall of nations which coal played in the Nineteenth Century. Oil is alleged to have been an important factor in bringing about the recent Turkish war and there is fear that it will cause another war.

The alleged efforts to identify the plans of the Standard Oil Company with the interests of the United States has been criticized by ex-Ambassador Morgenthau, Samuel Untermyer and many others. A number of Americans are said to be interested in the claims of the Sultan's heirs. One account of the Abdul Hamid estate and of the efforts of various interests to deprive the heirs of their rights was given yesterday as follows:

"Abdul Hamid was a billionaire when he died. He had been for years buying up great tracts of irrigated agricultural lands, until he owned millions of acres in Asia Minor, Thrace, Mesopotamia and Africa. This was his personal property. He paid takes [sic] on it to the Turkish Government, just as any other individual property owner would. His annual rentals from these lands were equal to $7,000,000 a year. His vast oil tracts in Mesopotamia were, of course, underdeveloped. The most valuable part of the oil fields now in controversy among nations is on his private lands.

"After he died, the tenants didn't pay any rents except in Constantinople, where the heirs have been receiving them.

"Major Bennett made an agreement with eighteen of the twenty-two heirs by which all their claims were to be turned over to corporations that he organized. There are five such corporations-one to take care of the copper and other metals, various great mineral deposits and the oil concessions.

"Then there are two holding companies that he organized in Virginia. His agreement with the heirs provided that he should advance a certain amount of cash which he paid them to give them certain interests in the stocks of these companies. He is also to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in the way of taxes and the registration of titles.

Private Rights Sacred.

"Under the Mohammedan laws, private rights are sacred. They cannot be seized by the Government even if the owner is declared a traitor. Land titles, when once registered in Turkey, are not subject to contest. These land titles are registered.

"The tens of thousands of tenants on the agricultural lands of the Sultan Abdul Hamid have paid no rent since he died and will pay no rent to any one other than his heirs.

"The French Government has recognized the rights of the Turkish heirs in the Syrian property and in the land and all concessions there.

"A billion dollars is a fair valuation to put on the property. It is one of fabulous wealth.

"The British Government has long been angling for the opportunity to get in on the Mesopotamian oil fields-thusfar without success. It recently put forth a claim that it had an option from the Sultan Abdul Hamid on this land, but could produce no writing substantiating its claims except a writing from the Turkish Ambassador said to have been written in 1915.

"It is understood that the British Government has now abandoned that contention. This contention is based on the recognition of the title of Abdul Hamid.

"For the past few years the Standard Oil Company has made repeated efforts to effect an arrangement with the Turkish heirs. To that end it has tried to deal with Major Bennett but without result. Having failed in that direction it appealed to our State Department to get a 'look-in' through the claim of our Government to the open door in Mesopotamia on the ground that, it being a free State, all countries should have an equal choice to exploit its resources quite overlooking the fact that the concessions to these oil fields were already owned by Turkish subjects whose rights will be protected.

"It has not been possible to learn what representations were made or what influences have been used to get our Government to interfere through the claim of the open door-which, in this case, means Standard Oil. If our Government persists in this attitude in the interest of the Standard Oil it looks as if the situation might become embarrassing.

"We have here, therefore, the following condition: The British Government is trying to get an interest in the Mesopotamian oil fields under the claim of an option from the Sultan Abdul Hamid which his heirs deny. The Turkish heirs claim that they own the oil fields, while our Government raises the contention that, since Mesopotamia is now a free State, the exploitation of these oil fields should be open to all countries-meaning the Standard Oil."

"To Fight for Billion and Rich Oil Lands for Sultan's Heirs". New York Times, December 2, 1922. URL: http://greek-genocide.net/index.php/bibliography/newspapers/159-2-dec-1922-to-fight-for-billion-and-rich-oil-lands-for-sultan-s-heirs

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1922-12-02: Untermyer Fights for Sultan's Heirs

UNTERMYER FIGHTS FOR SULTAN'S HEIRS

Retained by Turkish Princes and Princesses in Litigation Over Oil Lands.

BLAMES STANDARD OIL

Irwin Untermyer Departs Today for Lausanne to Conduct Case at Conference.

Samuel Untermyer is representing the heirs of the late Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, in a controversy before the Lausanne Near East conference over what is described as billions of dollars worth of mineral lands in the Mesopotamia oil area. His son, Irwin, will sail to-day on the Olympic to represent his father in Lausanne. It was only when his passage was booked yesterday that the fact of his father's interest in the case became known.

The struggle for possession of the property is between twenty-two Turkish princes and princesses one hand and the Standard Oil Company on the other, with various other interests attempting to participate in the millions.

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Mr. Untermyer last night charged that the Standard Oil Company is "actively gunning" for the fields "after its most approved gum-shoe fashion" and asserted he was convinced that "when Secretary Hughes becomes aware of the uses to which the Standard Oil Company is now seeking to put our Government the entire scheme will collapse."

Abdul Hamid's heirs are supported by the Turkish Government.

According to Mr. Untermyer, Capt. John Godolphin Bennett, former military attaché of the British Embassy at Constantinople and a friend of the sons and daughters of the Sultan, entered into an agreement with those heir whereby they turned over their interests to him. He paid several hundred thousand dollars in cash and agreed to pay other large sums in the way of taxes, registering titles and organizing companies in which the heirs would be Interested. In this enterprise he was joined by Lieut.-Col. G. Maltland Edwards, also a British officer. They perfected their titles and organized five companies.

"When I was in Europe last summer Capt. Bennett and Col. Edwards, representing the Turkish interests, retained me to act for those Interests." said Mr. Untermyer. "I am told that the Standard Oil Company, which is actively gunning in the Mesopotamia oil fields after its most approved gum-shoe fashion with the help of our State Government, has been circulating rumors relative to one John W. DeKay, whose name has appeared in dispatches from Lausanne in connection with the Mesopotamia fields. This is, I understand, a part of the Standard Oil's propaganda.

"I am convinced that when our distinguished Secretary of State is made aware of the uses to which the Standard Oil Company is now seeking to put our Government this whole scheme of the Standard Oil Company will collapse.

"The Mesopotamia oil fields, which constitute the great bone of contention in the Far East question, are situated largely on the private lands of the late Sultan. There are also oil fields in Syria and other countries an also on the land of his estate."

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"Untermyer Fights for Sultan's Heirs", The New York Herald. December 02, 1922. Vol. LXXXVII, N°94, Daily. DOI: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045774/1922-12-02/ed-1/seq-1/

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1922-12-04: À Lausanne. Toujours le pétrole de Mossoul

À LAUSANNE

TOUJOURS LE PÉTROLE DE MOSSOUL

Les Américains ne laisseront pas oublier leurs intérêts

Constantinople, 3 décembre. — M. Chester, qui est chargé de traiter avec le gouvernement d'Angora pour la sauvegarde et le développement des intérêts américains en Turquie, est arrivé à Constantinople.

Il a eu, pendant son séjour à Angora, une longue entrevue avec le président du conseil Raouf bey. Les grandes lignes de son projet sont presque arrêtées. M. Chester est venu à Constantinople conférer avec l'ambassadeur américain. Il repartira pour Angora dans quelques jours.

LES HERITIERS D'ABDUL HAMID S'EN MELENT!

New-York, 3 décembre. — Vingt-deux princes et princesses turcs, héritiers du sultan Abdul Hamid, réclament des terrains pétrolifères situés en Mésopotamie, d'une valeur dépassant un milliard de dollars. Ces terrains pétrolifères appartenaient, dit-on, à. Abdul Hamid, qui payait au gouvernement turc ces impôts pour ces terrains avec l'argent de sa cassette personnelle.

Un Américain, M. Untermeyer, homme de loi, vient de partir pour l'Europe afin d'aller à Lausanne faire valoir les droits des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid.

Le commandant Bennet, ancien attaché britannique à l'ambassade de Constantinople, représente déjà à Lausanne les héritiers en question et c'est lui qui 181 mandé M. Untermeyer.

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Confédération générale du travail (France), « A Lausanne. Toujours le pétrole de Mossoul », Le Peuple : organe quotidien du syndicalisme, [s.l.], édition 4 décembre 1922, Numéro 698, 4 décembre 1922. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4694779r

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1922-12-06 : Princes, princesses et pétroles

INFORMATIONS ECONOMIQUES ET SOCIALES

Princes, princesses et pétroles

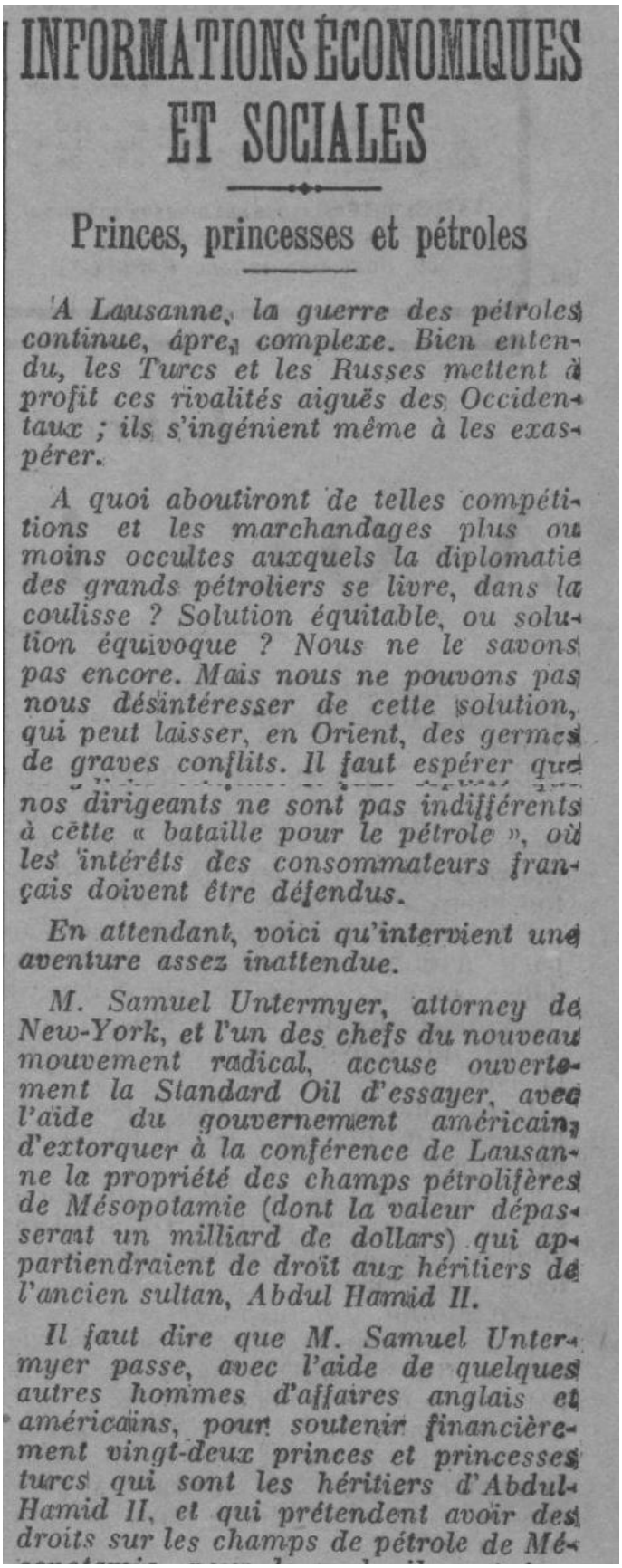
A Lausanne, la guerre des pétroles continue, âpre, complexe. Bien entendu, les Turcs et les Russes mettent à profit ces rivalités aiguës des Occidentaux ; ils s'ingénient même à les exaspérer.

A quoi aboutiront de telles compétitions et les marchandages plus ou moins occultes auxquels la diplomatie des grands pétroliers se livre, dans la coulisse ? Solution équitable, ou solution équivoque ? Nous ne le savons pas encore. Mais nous ne pouvons pas nous désintéresser de cette solution, qui peut laisser, en Orient, des germes de graves conflits. Il faut espérer que nos dirigeants ne sont pas indifférents à cette « bataille pour le pétrole », où les intérêts des consommateurs français doivent être défendus.

En attendant, voici qu'intervient une aventure assez inattendue.

M. Samuel Untermyer, attorney de New-York, et l'un des chefs du nouveau mouvement radical, accuse ouvertement la Standard Oil d'essayer, avec l'aide du gouvernement américain d'extorquer à la conférence de Lausanne la propriété des champs pétrolifères de Mésopotamie (dont la valeur dépasserait un milliard de dollars) qui appartiendraient de droit aux héritiers de l'ancien sultan, Abdul Hamid II.

Il faut dire que M. Samuel Untermyer passe, avec l'aide de quelques autres hommes d'affaires anglais et américains, pour soutenir financièrement vingt-deux princes et princesses turcs qui sont les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid II, et qui prétendent avoir des droits sur les champs de pétrole de…



INFORMATIONS ÉCONOMIQUES ET SOCIALES

Princes, princesses et pétroles

A Lausanne, la guerre des pétroles continue, âpre, complexe. Bien entendu, les Turcs et les Russes mettent à profit ces rivalités aiguës des Occidentaux ; ils s'ingénient même à les exaspérer.

A quoi aboutiront de telles compétitions et les marchandages plus ou moins occultes auxquels la diplomatie des grands pétroliers se livre, dans la coulisse ? Solution équitable, ou solution équivoque ? Nous ne le savons pas encore. Mais nous ne pouvons pas nous désintéresser de cette solution, qui peut laisser, en Orient, des germes de graves conflits. Il faut espérer que nos dirigeants ne sont pas indifférents à cette « bataille pour le pétrole », où les intérêts des consommateurs français doivent être défendus.

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Naturellement. la Standard Oil repousse dédaigneusement les accusations de M. Untermyer. Elle déclare qu'il est faux de dire que le département d'Etat ait, à Lausanne, épousé la cause de la Standard Oil et qu'elle n'a pu constater qu'une chose : à savoir que les agents officiels américains ont réclamé l'égalité de traitement pour, tous les étrangers en Mésopotamie. Quant à M. Untermyer, il a bien essayé d'entrer en pourparlers avec la compagnie pour lui offrir la vente de ses soi-disant propriétés mais la Standard Oil ne s'est même pas donné la peine d'ouvrir une enquête sur la validité de ses titres.

Intervention rocambolesque, mais qui n'est pas déplacée dans l'imbroglio de Lausanne.

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« Princes, princesses et pétroles », Le Radical -- 1922-12-06 -- periodiques, Paris, édition 06 décembre 1922 (Année 43), sect. Informations économiques et sociales, 6 décembre 1922. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7612797g

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1922-12-17: L'ombre de Mossoul à Lausanne

L'ombre de Mossoul à Lausanne

La couverture de Nazradine

Lausanne, 16 décembre (par téléphone de notre envoyé spécial). – Les metteurs en scène de la Conférence de Lausanne méritent d'être loués. Ils ont l'art de l'imprévu et posent soudainement une question à laquelle on ne pensait plus lorsque l'attention publique est tout entière, dirigée ailleurs.

On ne parle plus des Détroits, à Lausanne, provisoirement. La protection des chrétiens n'excite plus personne sauf ce bon Mr. Child qui tient beaucoup à ce que le patriarche grec continue de résider à Constantinople.

On est tout au pétrole, Lord Curzon ayant adressé hier aux Turcs un projet de convention concernant Mossoul. Pourquoi n'écrit-on pas un roman sur Mossoul, une épopée burlesque sur le pétrole ou un opuscule de médecine mentale sur la « pétrolite » qui est la manie d'expliquer l'histoire par l'appétit du pétrole ? Il y aurait matière !

Autour de Mossoul avant la guerre

C'est une histoire qui a commencé avant, la guerre. Un des grands desseins de l'Allemagne, c'était le chemin de fer de Bagdad. La concession de ces chemins de fer; qui date de 1888, comportait, pour les concessionnaires, le droit d'exploiter les mines et gisements dans une zone de vingt kilomètres, à droite et a gauche de la ligne. Mais vers 1901, on s'aperçut que la zone réservée n'englobait pas tous les gisements pétrolifères de la région. C'est pourquoi en 1904 les tentants du chemin…

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Les affaires politiques traversent parfois la politique des hommes d'affaires. Voici Abdul-Hamid renversé. Le contrat qu'il a passé va devenir, nul, Mais les Jeunes Turcs le ratifient et tout paraît marcher à souhait pour les propriétaires du chemin de fer. Cependant le pétrole prenant de plus en-plus d'importance, son prix augmentant en proportion de son utilisation, l'Angleterre réclame sa part à la Turquie. Elle la réclame avec tant de vivacité qu'en 1912 Mahmoud Chevket, ami des Allemandes qui avaient le chemin de fer, conseille ta ceux-ci de consentir un compromis.

Il y a des pourparlers et, en juin 1914 un accord intervient. La « Turkish Petroleum » est fondée son siège, est à Londres. 75 p. 100 du capital est anglais, 25 p. 100 reviennent à la « Deutsch Bank » représentant le chemin de fer. Les Allemands

…recevaient des compensations dans la golfe Persique. Mais la guerre éclate un mois après. Et les intérêts anglais et allemands étant violemment disjoints, la concession de la « Turkish Petroleum » n'est pas ratifiée par le gouvernement turc. Il est juridiquement inexistant.

La France reçoit et donne Mossoul

Et la guerre s'engage, se développe. On brûle du pétrole plutôt qu'on en concède. Pourtant en 1916 intervient l'accord tripartite entre la France, l'Angleterre et l'Italie. Ces grandes nations se partagent l'Empire ottoman et Mossoul est donné à la France. C'est de peu d'intérêt au point de vue national puisqu'en 1920, à San-Remo, la France cédait Mossoul à l'Angleterre.

Mais aujourd'hui l'accord tripartite, comme l'accord de San-Remo, a peu d'importance. Il a été fait en. dehors des Turcs et c'est avec la Turquie qu'on traite à Lausanne. Aussi les prétendants à Mossoul invoquent les droits d'avant-guerre.

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Les prétendants à Mossoul

La « Turkish Petroleum » dit « J'allais avoir une concession quand la guerre a éclaté. Ratifiez-la, ». Et le Chemin, de Fer de Bagdad, habillé aujourd'hui en Suisse, travesti peut-être demain en américain, rappelle qu'on lui a concédé une zone -- et que, cette zone n'étant pas assez large, on, lui a concédé tous les gisements.

Mais voici, les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid qui affirment « le droit de concéder était affecté à la liste civile. Héritiers, du sultan illégalement déchu, c'est nous seuls qui pouvons donner des concessions et. nous avons concédé Mossoul aux Américains. »

Ce n'est pas la seule base des revendications des Etats-Unis. En effet, en 1915, l'amiral américain Chester a obtenu la concession d'un chemin de fer partant d'Alexandrette vers le Nord-Est. Et cette concession comportait le droit d'exploiter les gisements pétrolifères une zone de vingt kilomètres.

On se représente que toutes ces revendications fondées sur des concessions ou des pseudo-concessions, n'apparaissent à Lausanne que comme épiphénomènes.

Le propriétaire des pétroles de Mossoul verra ses sûretés varier selon la puissance qui sera souveraine du territoire de Mossoul. Et ci est, pourquoi Lord Curzon a eu l'idée ingénieuse de proposer de rendre le mandant de, l'Angleterre sur Mossoul à la Société des Nations qui l'offrirait à la Turquie, laquelle concéderait' alors, en bonne forme, les pétroles aux intérêts anglais.

Notre ami Rakowsky nous disait hier :

« Lorsque les puissances impérialistes approchent leurs mains encore toutes sanglantes de la répression irlandaise et de la conquête marocaine vers l'Orient en affirmant qu'elles veulent protéger les peuples, il n'y a qu'un mot à leur dire, « A bas les pattes ! » Cette apostrophe ne paraîtra pas trop sévère si l'on considère l'âpreté avec laquelle les Etats bourgeois cherchent à s'approprier les richesses naturelles de la Turquie.

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Un apologue

Mais que pense la Turquie de ces entre- prises ? Je l'ai demandé une personnalité fort distinguée de la délégation turque. Et elle m'a répondu par cette histoire :

Connaissez-vous Nazraddine ? C'est le Diogène turc. Eh bien, un jour Nazraddine était couché chez lui; avec sa femme, et il entendit dans la rue le bruit d'une- dispute. Aussitôt il se lève, s'enveloppe dans sa couverture, sort et sépare ceux qui se battaient. Quand il rentre dans sa chambre, va femme lui dit « Quoi ! quoi ! Nazraddine, tu es tout nu. Qu'as-tu fait de ta couverture ?

Et Nazraddine répondit :

« Que veux-tu ? Le sujet de la dispute, c'était ma couverture !»

On comprendra mieux cet apologue si l'on considère que les Turcs, laisseraient volontiers les pétroles de Mossoul inexploités alors qu'on s'en dispute le profit. Et les puissances laisseraient sans doute les Turcs beaucoup plus tranquilles si ceux-ci n'étaient, pas embarrassés de ce pétrole. qui pourrait bien jouer à Lausanne le rôle de la couverture de Nazraddine.

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Parti communiste français et Delhay (A.), « L'ombre de Mossoul à Lausanne », *L'Humanité : journal socialiste quotidien* -- 1922-12-17 -- periodiques, Paris, édition 17 décembre 1922 (Numéro 6840), sect. Nouvelles internationales, 17 décembre 1922. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k400614h

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1923-01-08 : Le Pétrole de Mossoul éclaire Lausanne

LE PÉTROLE DE MOSSOUL ÉCLAIRE LAUSANNE

Où l'on voit que cette précieuse huile minérale appartenant en propre aux héritiers d'Abdul Hamid devint par l'intermédiaire de deux sujets britanniques propriété privée d'une société américaine

Et où l'on comprend que l'Angleterre s'efforce désespérément de faire admettre que les biens privés du sultan étaient des biens de la couronne !

Le ministre des affaires étrangères britannique a l'intention de suivre jusqu'au bout les délibérations de la conférence de Lausanne. (Matin.)

Le moment est venu de dire toute la vérité.

Car l'histoire quel voici, qui va vous sembler un conte des Mille et une nuits, est pourtant toute la vérité.

Si nous ne précisons pas les dates, si nous ne donnons pas les noms de nos personnages ; si nous restons à dessein dans le vague, c'est uniquement pour ne pas gêner l'action de nos représentants ; car si, pour ajouter foi à notre hélas trop véridique récit, l'opinion française a besoin de documents pour étayer notre témoignage, nous les publierons ici. Or donc ceci se passait en 1914.

Le gouvernement ottoman ayant eu quelque chose à demander au gouvernement anglais, celui-ci, qui n'aime guère à travailler gratuitement, lui demanda tout aussitôt en échange la concession des pétroles de Mossoul.

Candide, le gouvernement ottoman accorda, et, à la suite de cela, une société fut fondée avec l'appui du gouvernement anglais, la *Turkish Oil Company*, pour l'exploitation des pétroles de Mossoul.

Vint la guerre. Le gouvernement anglais déclara que les négociations seraient reprises plus tard. Aucune concession écrite n'avait été donnée ; aucun document officiel n'ayant été signé par la Sublime-Porte. Il n'y avait qu'une chose de faite : la *Turkish Oil Company* était fondée.

Et lorsqu'à la fameuse conférence de San-Remo, on parla pétrole, pour éviter que le ton devint trop vif, le ministre des affaires étrangères britannique accorda un pourcentage de pétrole aux alliés sur la base des droits de la *Turkish Oil*. Il accorda 25% à la France. Il y avait d'ailleurs ce corollaire savoureux : pour ces 25% de pétrole de Mossoul, quand ils seraient exploités, la France donnerait 50% des pétroles de ses colonies, quand ils seraient exploités.

*****

La famille impériale ottomane, jusqu'au sultan Abdul Hamid, avait vécu aux frais du trésor de la couronne. Mais voyant sa descendance directe augmenter, prévoyant que des évènements pourraient un jour obliger les siens à quitter les palais impériaux, peut-être même Constantinople, Abdul Hamid, qui laissa six épouses et quinze enfants, eut le souci de leur constituer une fortune personnelle, par des achats de ses deniers, par des concessions données à titre privé, par des acquisitions de domaines et de mines.

Cette fortune était gérée par le ministre des Finances ottoman, en même temps qu'il gérait les biens de la liste civile. Deux comptabilités distinctes étaient tenues, l'une pour les biens de la couronne, l'autre pour la fortune personnelle du sultan, laquelle relevait de la loi ottomane et ne jouissait d'aucun privilège spécial

Les héritiers de Sa Majesté, s'appuyant au point de vue

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Phot. René Gilbert
Le général Jouinot-GAMBETTA

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Inutile de dire que le Foreign Office, apprenant ces choses, ne conçut pour les deux officiers, qui en avaient été les adroits et rapides organisateurs qu'une affection toute relative. Il n'est pas exagéré de croire que s'ils voulaient habiter leur pays d'origine, ils y rencontreraient aujourd'hui quelques difficultés. Dès la signature du contrat, les contractants relevèrent avec exactitude et précision toutes, les propriétés, qui figuraient sur la liste des biens privés de feu le sultan, et en firent sans délai légaliser les titres aussi bien par les autorités civiles que par les autorités religieuses. Il ne faut pas oublier en effet que, dans tous les pays musulmans les questions d'héritages ne doivent pas seulement être en règle avec les lois civiles, mais encore avec les lois divines.

Voici donc les biens qu'Abdul Hamid a laissés aux siens régulièrement et complètement reconnus comme étant leur propriété. Et voici ces biens passés avec toutes les formalités requise à une société américaine.

Parmi ces biens qui font aujourd'hui, nous apprennent les dépêches, l'objet des travaux de la commission financière de la conférence de Lausanne se trouve la totalité des pétroles de Mossoul.

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Qu'est-ce donc qui a été concédé à la *Turkish Oil Company* ?

Et, quels sont ces 25% des pétroles de Mossoul qui nous ont été généreusement promis à San-Remo?

Une fois de plus, il nous semble que la France — et les autres nations qui marchaient avec l'Angleterre et qui avaient obtenu leur part de pourcentage — a été frustrée…

Mais pour la première fois il nous semble que l'Angleterre l'a été aussi !

Et il nous semble que la délégation ottomane de Lausanne est parfaitement justifiée à déclarer biens privés les biens que l'Angleterre fait des efforts désespérés pour déclarer biens de la couronne. On se demande, par exemple, pourquoi la France suit…

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Et il faut bien que les titres sur lesquels ils se sont appuyés pour apporter leur concours aient été sérieux et solides, car ce concours financier se monte déjà à plusieurs dizaines de millions de dollars. Le revenu de ces biens, — sans comprendre naturellement les concessions de pétrole, puisqu'elles ne sont pas encore exploitées, ni la plupart des mines, — atteint tout de même deux millions de livres. Et cela, quoiqu'ils soient certainement mal gérés dans les circonstances actuelles.

Ce n'est pas sans avoir contrôlé la valeur des biens et la légitimité des titres de propriété que le gouvernement de Washington, se plaçant derrière cette société, faisait tout récemment connaitre au chef de la délégation turque à Lausanne que, si les intérêts des Américains n'étaient pas respectés, il n'hésiterait pas à réclamer l'arbitrage de puissances agréées par lui.

Et ne faut-il pas que cette question soit d'une primordiale importance pour que les Anglais sachent — car ils le savent. ! — sur quelle base fragile est édifiée la *Turkish Oil Company*, la maintiennent pourtant et la mettent en avant? Ils cherchent par tous les moyens possibles (et c'est là le fond réel de toute leur politique en Orient) à obtenir leur liberté dans le vilayet de Mossoul, moyen unique de donner à cette Société les fameux pétroles qu'elle n'a jamais eus.

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Jouinot-Gambetta (Général). « Le pétrole de Mossoul éclaire Lausanne ». Le Matin : derniers télégrammes de la nuit. Directeur de publication : Edwards, Alfred (1856-1914). Paris, 18 janvier 1923, Numéro 14183. Bibliothèque nationale de France. DOI : https ://gallica.bnf.fr/ark :/12148/bpt6k5742161. Page 1.

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1923-01-19 : L'Affaire des Pétroles de Mossoul

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Paris, 18 janvier. — Dans le Matin, le général Jouinot-Gambetta donne les précisions suivantes sur l'affaire de Mossoul :

En 1914, le gouvernement ottoman, ayant eu quelque chose à demander au gouvernement anglais, celui-ci lui demanda, tout aussitôt, en échange, la concession des pétroles de Mossoul. Le gouvernement accorda de suite cela. Une Société fut fondée, avec l'appui du gouvernement anglais,

Vint la guerre. Le gouvernement anglais déclara que les négociations seraient reprises plus tard. Aucune concession écrite n'avait été donnée ; aucun document officiel, n'avait été signé par la Sublime-Porte. Il n'y avait qu'une chose défaite : la Société était fondée.

Par ailleurs, Abdul Hamid avait concédé aux héritiers de sa fortune personnelle les moyens d'acquisition des domaines de mines et de concessions données à titre privé. Les héritiers réclamèrent, à plusieurs reprises, ce qui leur était dû.

Deux officiers anglais, bien placés par leurs fonctions, entrèrent en rapport avec eux. Par un contrat en bonne et due forme, de leur propre autorité, ils se firent céder tous leurs droits, à charge par eux de constituer trois Sociétés, une pour les domaines, une pour les mines, une pour les pétroles, dont les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid sont seuls actionnaires.

Sur ce contrat, les héritiers ont touché des arrhes, se montant à un million de dollars. Les deux sujets de Sa Majesté Britannique constituèrent une Société-mère américaine, régie par les lois américaines et financée par des fonds américains, qui prit leurs droits et assura leurs charges.

On conçoit que, dans ces conditions, le gouvernement anglais s'efforce, désespérément, de faire admettre que les biens Privés, d'Abdul Hamid étaient bien réguliers. La Couronne cherche par tous les moyens possibles, c'est là le fond réel de toute sa politique en Orient, à obtenir sa liberté dans le villayet de Mossoul, afin de donner à la Société fondée en 1914, les fameux pétroles qu'elle n'a jamais eus. On comprend aussi pourquoi le ministre des affaires étrangères de la Grande-Bretagne ne bouge pas de Lausanne et pourquoi il n'en peut bouger. Il faut, à tout prix donner une existence légale à la société en question.

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« L'Affaire des Pétroles de Mossoul », *L'Echo d'Alger : journal républicain du matin*, Alger, édition 19 janvier 1923 (Année 12, N°4851), 19 janvier 1923. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k75805135. p. 2.

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1923-01-22 : Pétrole ottoman

Pétrole ottoman

Le général Jouillot-Gambetta raconte dans le « Matin » (de Paris), comment fut fondée avant la guerre la société anglaise « *Turkish Oil Company* » pour l'exploitation des pétroles de Mossoul, et comment d'autre part une société américaine a été récemment constituée pour l'exploitation des mines de pétroles dont les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid étaient propriétaires. Ces derniers sont les seuls actionnaires de cette société mère financée par des fonds américains et régie par des lois américaines.

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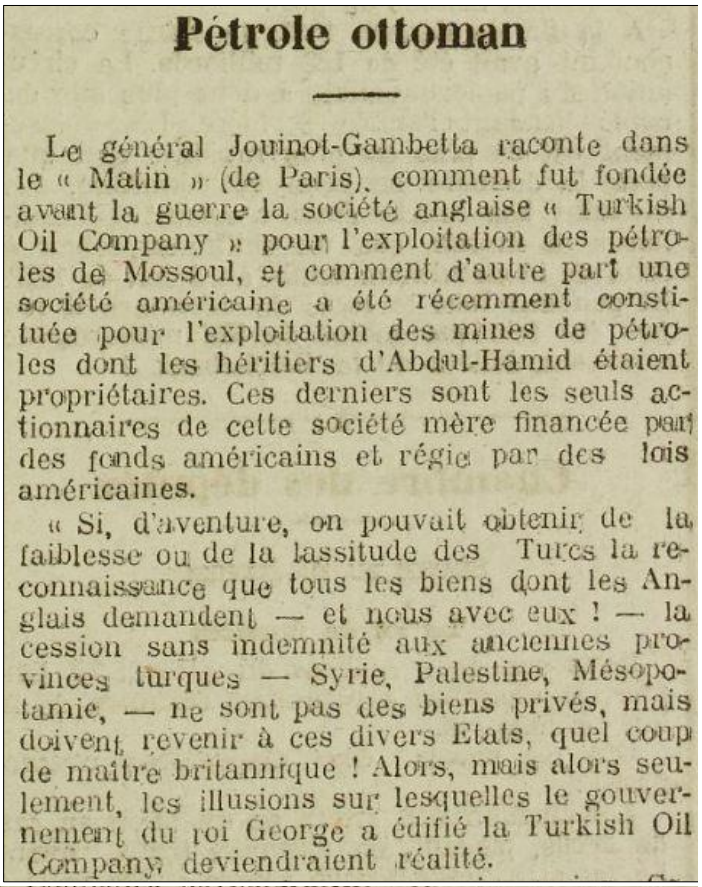

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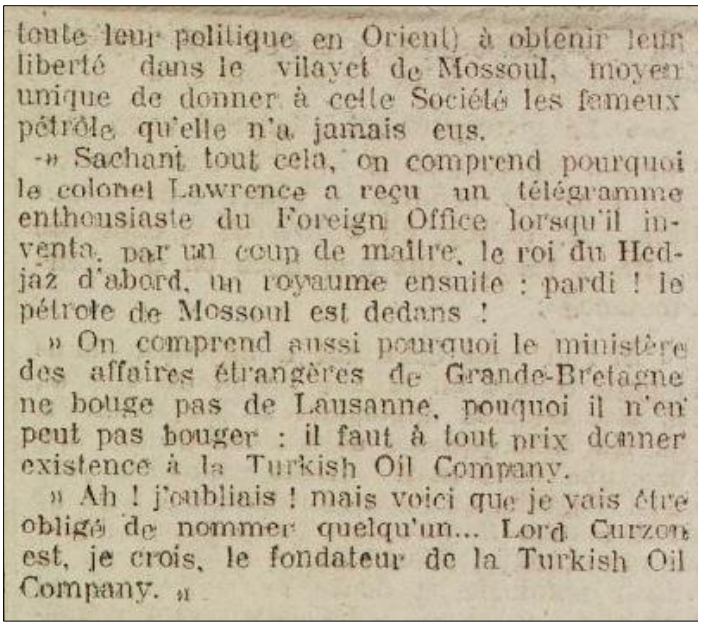
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« Pétrole ottoman », *L'Écho : grand quotidien d'information du Centre Ouest*, Angoulême, France, édition 22 janvier 1923, 52e année, 22 janvier 1923. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k46604891. Consulté le 28 janvier 2020, p. 1.

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1923-02-17 : The Mesopotamian Oilfields

The Mesopotamian Oilfields

(By Our Special Correspondant)

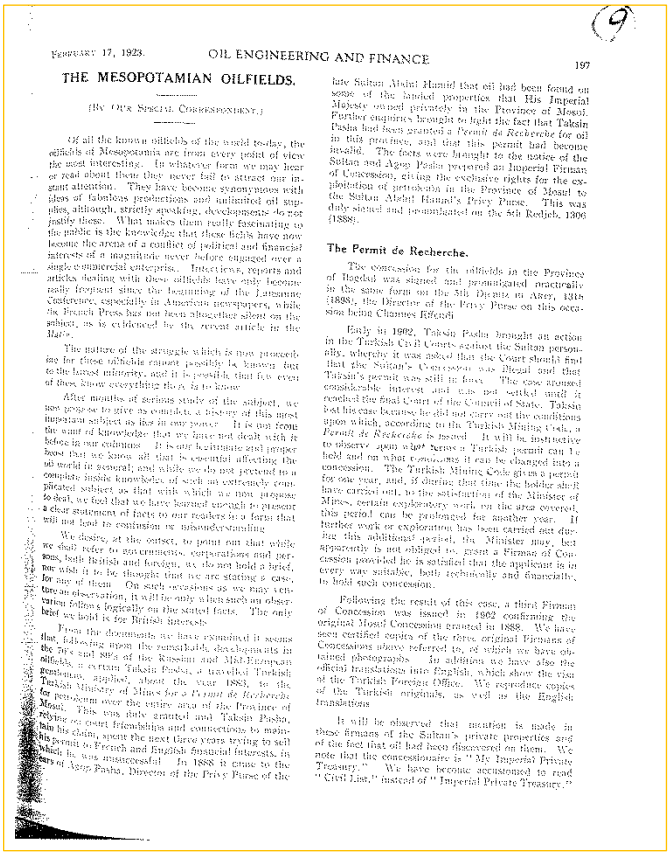
Of all the known oilfields of the world to-day, the oilfields of Mesopotamia are from every point of view the most interesting. In whatever form we may hear or read about them they never fail to attract our instant attention. They have become synonymous with ideas of fabulous production and unlimited oil supplies, although, strictly speaking, developments do not justify these. What makes them really fascinating to the public is the knowledge that these fields have now become the arena of a conflict of political and financial interests of a magnitude never before engaged over a single commercial enterprise. Interviews, reports and articles dealing with these oilfields have only become really frequent since the beginning of the Lausanne Conference, especially in American newspapers, while the French Press has not been altogether silent on the subject, as is evidenced by the recent article in the *Matin*.

The nature of the struggle which is now proceeding for these oilfields cannot possibly be known but to the barest minority, and it is possible that few even of these know everything there is to know.

After months of serious study of the subject, we now propose to give as complete a history of this most important subject as lies in our power. It is not from the want of knowledge that we have not dealt with it before in our columns. It is our legitimate and proper boast that we know all that is essential affecting the oil world in general; and while we do not pretend to a complete inside knowledge of such an extremely complicated subject as that with which we now propose to deal, we feel that we have learned enough to present a clear statement of facts to our readers in a form that will not lead to confusion or misunderstanding.

We desire, at the outset, to point out that while we shall refer to governments, corporations and persons, both British and foreign, we do not hold a brief, nor wish it to be thought that we are stating a case, for any of them. On such occasions as we may venture an observation, it will be only when such an observation follows logically on the stated facts. The only brief we hold is for British interests.

From the documents we have examined it seems that, following upon the remarkable developments in the 70's and 80's of the Russian and Mid-European oilfields, a certain Taksin Pasha, a traveled Turkish gentleman, applied, about the year 1883, to the Turkish Ministry of Mines for a *Permis de Recherche* from petroleum over the entire area of the Province of Mosul. This was duly granted and Taksin Pasha, relying on court friendships and connections to maintain his claim, spent the next three years trying to sell his permit to French and English financial interests, in which he was unsuccessful. In 1888, it came to the ears of Agop Pasha, Director of the Privy Purse of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid that oil had been found on some of the landed properties that His Imperial Majesty owned privately in the Province of Mosul. Further enquiries brought to light the fact that Taksin Pasha had been granted a *Permis de Recherche* for oil in this province, and that this permit had become invalid. The facts were brought to the notice of the Sultan and Agop Pasha



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THE MESOPOTAMIAN OILFIELDS.

(By Our Special Correspondent.)

Of all the known oilfields of the world to-day, the oilfields of Mesopotamia are from every point of view the most interesting. In whatever form we may hear or read about them they never fail to attract our instant attention. They have become synonymous with ideas of fabulous productions and unlimited oil supplies, although, strictly speaking, developments do not justify these. What makes them really fascinating to the public is the knowledge that these fields have now become the arena of a conflict of political and financial interests of a magnitude never before engaged over a single commercial enterprise. Interviews, reports and articles dealing with these oilfields have only become really frequent since the beginning of the Lausanne Conference, especially in American newspapers, while the French Press has not been altogether silent on the subject, as is evidenced by the recent article in the *Matin*.

The nature of the struggle which is now proceeding for these oilfields cannot possibly be known but to the barest minority, and it is possible that few even of these know everything there is to know.

After months of serious study of the subject, we now propose to give as complete a history of this most important subject as lies in our power. It is not from the want of knowledge that we have not dealt with it before in our columns. It is our legitimate and proper boast that we know all that is essential affecting the oil world in general; and while we do not pretend to a complete inside knowledge of such an extremely complicated subject as that with which we now propose to deal, we feel that we have learned enough to present a clear statement of facts to our readers in a form that will not lead to confusion or misunderstanding.

We desire, at the outset, to point out that while we shall refer to governments, corporations and persons, both British and foreign, we do not hold a brief, nor wish it to be thought that we are stating a case, for any of them. On such occasions as we may venture an observation, it will be only when such an observation follows logically on the stated facts. The only brief we hold is for British interests.

From the documents we have examined it seems that, following upon the remarkable developments in the 70's and 80's of the Russian and Mid-European oilfields, a certain Taksin Pasha, a traveled Turkish gentleman, applied, about the year 1883, to the Turkish Ministry of Mines for a *Permit de Recherche* from petroleum over the entire area of the Province of Mosul. This was duly granted and Taksin Pasha, relying on court friendships and connections to maintain his claim, spent the next three years trying to sell his permit to French and English financial interests, in which he was unsuccessful. In 1888 it came to the ears of Agop Pasha, Director of the Privy Purse of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid that oil had been found on some of the landed properties that His Imperial Majesty owned privately in the Province of Mosul. Further enquiries brought to light the fact that Taksin Pasha had been granted a *Permit de Recherche* for oil in this province, and that this permit had become invalid. The facts were brought to the notice of the Sultan and Agop Pasha prepared an Imperial Firman of Concession, giving the exclusive rights for the exploitation of petroleum in the Province of Mosul to the Sultan Abdul Hamid's Privy Purse. This was duly signed and promulgated on the 5th Redjeb, 1306 (1888).

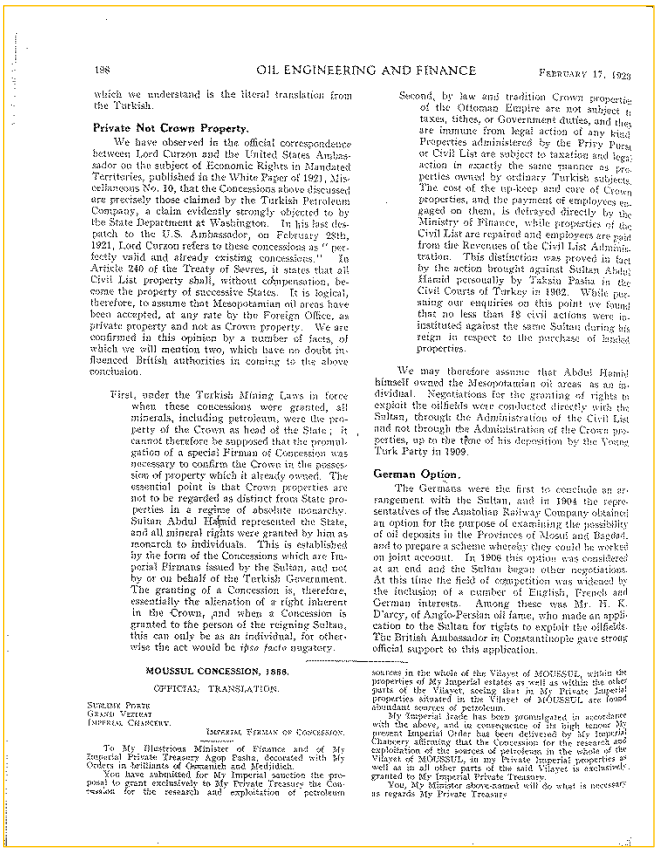
The Permit de Recherche.

The concession for the oilfields in the Province of Bagdad was signed and promulgated practically in the same form on the 5th Djemad in Ahrer, 1318 (1898), the Director of the Privy Purse on this occasion being Chamses Effendi.

Early in 1902, Taksin Pasha brought an action in the Turkish Civil Courts against the Sultan personally, whereby it was asked that the Court should find that the Sultan's Concession was illegal and that Taksin's permit was still in force. The case aroused considerable interest and was not settled until it reached the final Court of the Council of State. Taksin lost his case because he did not carry out the conditions upon which, according to the Turkish Mining Code, a *Permit de Recherche* is issued. It will be instructive to observe upon what terms a Turkish permit can be held and on what conditions it can be changed into a concession. The Turkish Mining Code gives a permit for one year, and, if during that time the holder shall have carried out, to the satisfaction of the Minister of Mines, certain exploratory work on the area covered, this period can be prolonged for another year. If further work or exploration has been carried out during this additional period, the Minister may, but apparently is not obliged to, grant a Firman of Concession provided he is satisfied that the applicant is in every way suitable, both technically and financially, to hold such concession.

Following the result of this case, a third Firman of Concession was issued in 1902 confirming the original Mosul Concession granted in 1888. We have seen certified copies of the three original Firmans of Concessions above referred to, of which we have obtained photographs. In addition we have also the official translations into English, which show the visa of the Turkish Foreign Office. We reproduce copies of the Turkish originals, as well as the English translations.

It will be observed that mention is made in these firmans of the Sultan's private properties and of the fact that oil had been discovered on them. We note that the concessionaire is "My Imperial Private Treasury." We have become accustomed to read "Civil List," instead of "Imperial Private Treasury."



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which we understand is the literal translation from the Turkish.

Private Not Crown Property.

We have observed in the official correspondence between Lord Curzon and the United States Ambassador on the subject of Economic Rights in Mandated Territories, published in the White Paper of 1921, Miscellaneous No. 10, that the Concessions above discussed are precisely those claimed by the Turkish Petroleum Company, a claim evidently strongly objected to by the State Department at Washington. In his last despatch to the U.S. Ambassador, on February 28th, 1921, Lord Curzon refers to these concessions as "perfectly valid and already existing concessions." In Article 240 of the Treaty of Sevres, it states that all Civil List property shall, without compensation, become the property of successive States. It is logical, therefore, to assume that Mesopotamian oil areas have been accepted, at any rate by the Foreign Office, as private property and not as Crown property. We are confirmed in this opinion by a number of facts, of which we will mention two, which have no doubt influenced British authorities in coming to the above conclusion.

First, under the Turkish Mining Laws in force when these concessions were granted, all minerals, including petroleum, were the property of the Crown as head of the State; it cannot therefore be supposed that the promulgation of a special Firman of Concession was necessary to confirm the Crown in the possession of property which it already owned. The essential point is that Crown properties are not to be regarded as distinct from State properties in a regime of absolute monarchy. Sultan Abdul Hamid represented the State, and all mineral rights were granted by him as monarch to individuals. This is established by the form of the Concessions which are Imperial Firmans issued by the Sultan, and not by or on behalf of the Turkish Government. The granting of a Concession is, therefore, essentially the alienation of a right inherent in the Crown, and when a Concession is granted to the person of the reigning Sultan, this can only be as an individual, for otherwise the act would be *ipso facto* nugatory.

Second, by law and tradition Crown properties of the Ottoman Empire are not subject to taxes, tithes, or Government duties, and they are immune from legal action of any kind. Properties administered by the Privy Purse or Civil List are subject to taxation and legal action in exactly the same manner as properties owned by ordinary Turkish subjects. The cost of the up-keep and care of Crown properties, and the payment of employees engaged on them, is defrayed directly by the Ministry of Finance, while properties of the Civil List are repaired and employees are paid from the Revenues of the Civil List Administration. This distinction was proved in fact by the action brought against Sultan Abdul Hamid personally by Taksin Pasha in the Civil Courts of Turkey in 1902. While pursuing our enquiries on this point we found that no less than 18 civil actions were instituted against the same Sultan during his reign in respect to the purchase of landed properties.

We may therefore assume that Abdul Hamid himself owned the Mesopotamian oil areas as an individual. Negotiations for the granting of rights to exploit the oilfields were conducted directly with the Sultan, through the Administration of the Civil List and not through the Administration of the Crown properties, up to the time of his deposition by the Young Turk Party in 1909.

German Option.

The Germans were the first to conclude an arrangement with the Sultan, and in 1904 the representatives of the Anatolian Railway Company obtained an option for the purpose of examining the possibility of oil deposits in the Provinces of Mosul and Bagdad, and to prepare a scheme whereby they could be worked on joint account. In 1906 this option was considered at an end and the Sultan began other negotiations. At this time the field of competition was widened by the inclusion of a number of English, French and German interests. Among these was Mr. H. K. D'arcy, of Anglo-Persian oil fame, who made an application to the Sultan for rights to exploit the oilfields. The British Ambassador in Constantinople gave strong official support to this application.

MOUSSUL CONCESSION, 1888.

OFFICIAL TRANSLATION.

SUBLIME PORTE
GRAND VEZIRAT
IMPERIAL CHANCERY.

IMPERIAL FIRMAN OF CONCESSION.

To My Illustrious Minister of Finance and of My Imperial Private Treasury Agop Pasha, decorated with My Orders in brilliants of Osmanieh and Medjidieh.

You have submitted for My Imperial sanction the proposal to grant exclusively to My Private Treasury the Concession for the research and exploitation of petroleum sources in the whole of the Vilayet of MOUSSUL, within the properties of My Imperial estates as well as within the other parts of the Vilayet, seeing that in My Private Imperial properties situated in the Vilayet of MOUSSUL are found abundant sources of petroleum.

My Imperial Irade has been promulgated in accordance with the above, and in consequence of its high tenour My present Imperial Order has been delivered by My Imperial Chancery affirming that the Concession for the research and exploitation of the sources of petroleum in the whole of the Vilayet of MOUSSUL, in my Private Imperial properties as well as in all other parts of the said Vilayet is exclusively granted to My Imperial Private Treasury.

You, My Minister above-named will do what is necessary as regards My Private Treasure

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The Permis de Recherche

The concession for the oilfields in the Province of Bagdad was signed and promulgated practically in the same form on the 5th Djemaz-ul-Akher, 1316 (1898), the Director of the Privy Purse on this occasion being Ohannès Effendi.

Early in 1902, Taksin Pasha brought an action in the Turkish Civil Courts against the Sultan personally, whereby it was asked that the Court should find that the Sultan's Concession was illegal and that Taksin's permit was still in force. The case aroused considerable interest and was not settled until it reached the final Court of the Council of State. Taksin lost his case because he did not carry out the conditions upon which, according to the Turkish Mining Code, a *Permis de Recherche* is issued. It will be instructive to observe upon what terms a Turkish permit can be held and on what conditions it can be changed into a concession. The Turkish Mining Code gives a permit for one year, and, if during that time the holder shall have carried out, to the satisfaction of the Minister of Mines, certain exploratory work on the area covered, this period can be prolonged for another year. If further work or exploration has been carried out during this additional period, the Minister may, but apparently is not obliged to, grant a Firman of Concession provided he is satisfied that the applicant is in every way suitable, both technically and financially, to hold such concession.

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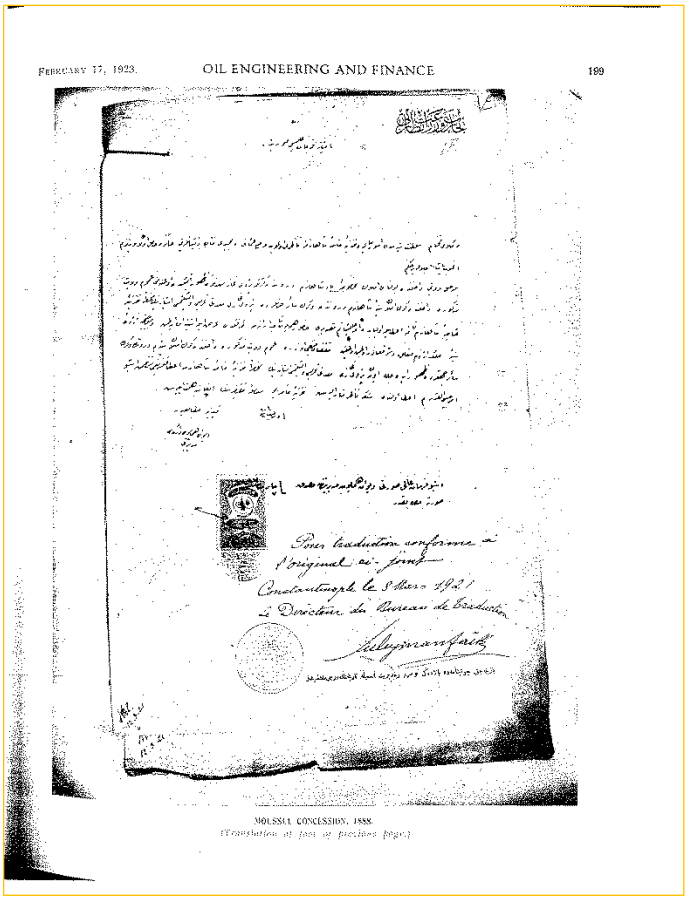
It will be observed that mention is made in these firmans of the Sultan's private properties and of the fact that oil had been discovered on them. We note that the *concessionnaire* is "My Imperial Treasury". We have become accustomed to read "Civil List," instead of "Imperial Private Treasury," which we understand is the literal translation from the Turkish.

Private Not Crown Property

We have observed in the official correspondence between Lord Curzon and the United States Ambassador on the subject of Economic Rights in Mandated Territories, published in the White Paper of 1921, Miscellaneous No. 10, that the concessions above discussed are precisely those claimed by the Turkish Petroleum Company, a claim evidently strongly objected to by the State Department at Washington. In his last despatch to the U.S. Ambassador, on February 28th, 1921, Lord Curzon refers to these concessions as "perfectly valid and already existing concessions". In Article 240 of the Treaty of Sevres, it states that all Civil List property shall, without compensation, become the property of successive States. It is logical, therefore, to assume that Mesopotamian oil areas have been accepted, at any rate by the Foreign Office, as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MOUSSUL CONCESSION, 1888.
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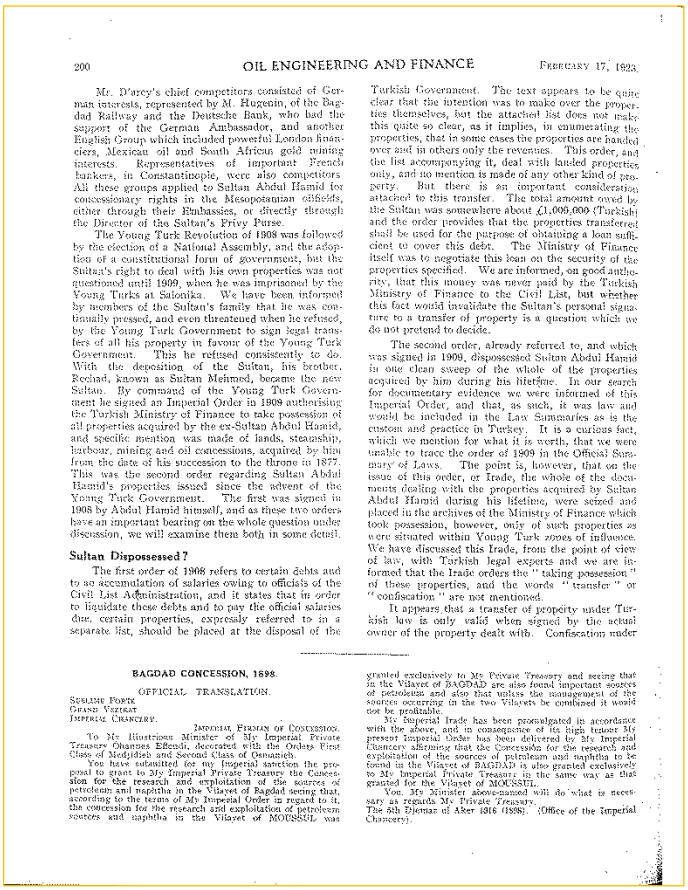
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Mr. D'arcy's chief competitors consisted of German interests, represented by M. Hugenin, of the Bagdad Railway and the Deutsche Bank, who had the support of the German Ambassador, and another English Group which included powerful London financiers, Mexican oil and South African gold mining interests. Representatives of important French bankers, in Constantinople, were also competitors. All these groups applied to Sultan Abdul Hamid for concessionary rights in the Mesopotamian oilfields, either through their Embassies, or directly through the Director of the Sultan's Privy Purse.

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 was followed by the election of a National Assembly, and the adoption of a constitutional form of government, but the Sultan's right to deal with his own properties was not questioned until 1909, when he was imprisoned by the Young Turks at Salonika. We have been informed by members of the Sultan's family that he was continually pressed, and even threatened when he refused, by the Young Turk Government to sign legal transfers of all his property in favour of the Young Turk Government. This he refused consistently to do. With the deposition of the Sultan, his brother, Reshad, known as Sultan Mehmed, became the new Sultan. By command of the Young Turk Government he signed an Imperial Order in 1909 authorising the Turkish Ministry of Finance to take possession of all properties acquired by the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid, and specific mention was made of lands, steamship, harbour, mining and oil concessions, acquired by him from the date of his succession to the throne in 1877. This was the second order regarding Sultan Abdul Hamid's properties issued since the advent of the Young Turk Government. The first was signed in 1908 by Abdul Hamid himself, and as these two orders have an important bearing on the whole question under discussion, we will examine these both in some detail.

Sultan Dispossessed?

The first order of 1908 refers to certain debts and to an accumulation of salaries owing to officials of the Civil List Administration, and it states that in order to liquidate these debts and to pay the official salaries due, certain properties, expressly referred to in a separate list, should be placed at the disposal of the Turkish Government. The text appears to be quite clear that the intention was to make over the properties themselves, but the attached list does not make this quite so clear, as it implies, in enumerating the properties, that in some cases the properties are handed over and in others only the revenues. This order, and the list accompanying it, deal with landed properties only, and no mention is made of any other kind of property. But there is an important consideration attached to this transfer. The total amount owed by the Sultan was somewhere about £1,000,000 (Turkish) and the order provides that the properties transferred shall be used for the purpose of obtaining a loan sufficient to cover this debt. The Ministry of Finance itself was to negotiate this loan on the security of the properties specified. We are informed, on good authority, that this money was never paid by the Turkish Ministry of Finance to the Civil List, but whether this fact would invalidate the Sultan's personal signature to a transfer of property is a question which we do not pretend to decide.

The second order, already referred to, and which was signed in 1909, dispossessed Sultan Abdul Hamid in one clean sweep of the whole of the properties acquired by him during his lifetime. In our search for documentary evidence we were informed of this Imperial Order, and that, as such, it was law and would be included in the Law Summaries as is the custom and practice in Turkey. It is a curious fact, which we mention for what it is worth, that we were unable to trace the order of 1909 in the Official Summary of Laws. The point is, however, that on the issue of this order, or Irade, the whole of the documents dealing with the properties acquired by Sultan Abdul Hamid during his lifetime, were seized and placed in the archives of the Ministry of Finance which took possession, however, only of such properties as were situated within Young Turk zones of influence. We have discussed this Irade, from the point of view of law, with Turkish legal experts and we are informed that the Irade orders the "taking possession" of these properties, and the words "transfer" or "confiscation" are not mentioned.

It appears that a transfer of property under Turkish law is only valid when signed by the actual owner of the property dealt with. Confiscation under

BAGDAD CONCESSION, 1898.

OFFICIAL TRANSLATION.

SUBLIME PORTE
GRAND VIZIERAT
IMPERIAL CHANCERY.

IMPERIAL FIRMAN OF CONCESSION.

To My Illustrious Minister of My Imperial Private Treasury Ohannes Effendi, decorated with the Ordeys First Class of Medjidieh and Second Class of Osmanieh.

You have submitted for my Imperial sanction the proposal to grant to My Imperial Private Treasury the Concession for the research and exploitation of the sources of petroleum and naphtha in the Vilayet of Bagdad seeing that, according to the terms of My Imperial Order in regard to it, the concession for the research and exploitation of petroleum sources and naphtha in the Vilayet of MOUSSUL was granted exclusively to My Private Treasury and seeing that in the Vilayet of BAGDAD are also found important sources of petroleum and also that unless the management of the sources occurring in the two Vilayets be combined it would not be profitable.

My Imperial Irade has been promulgated in accordance with the above, and in consequence of its high tenor My present Imperial Order has been delivered by My Imperial Chancery affirming that the Concession for the research and exploitation of the sources of petroleum and naphtha to be found in the Vilayet of BAGDAD is also granted exclusively to My Imperial Private Treasury in the same way as that granted for the Vilayet of MOUSSUL.

You, My Minister above-named will do what is necessary as regards My Private Treasury.

The 5th Djemian of Aker 1316 (1898). (Office of the Imperial Chancery).

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private properties and not as Crown property. We are confirmed in this opinion by a number of facts, of which we will mention two, which have no doubt influenced British authorities in coming to the above conclusion.

First, under the Turkish Mining Law in force when these concessions were granted, all minerals, including petroleum, were the property of the Crown as head of the State; it cannot therefore be supposed that the promulgation of a special Firman of Concession was necessary to confirm the Crown in the possession of property which it already owned. The essential point is that the Crown properties are not to be regarded as distinct from State properties in a regime of absolute monarchy. Sultan Abdul Hamid represented the State, and all mineral rights were granted by him as monarch to individuals. This is established by the form of the Concessions which are Imperial Firmans issued by the Sultan, and not by or on behalf of the Turkish Government. The granting of a Concession is, therefore, essentially the alienation of a right inherent in the Crown, and when a Concession is granted to the person of the reigning Sultan, this can only be as an individual, for otherwise the act would be *ipso facto* nugatory.

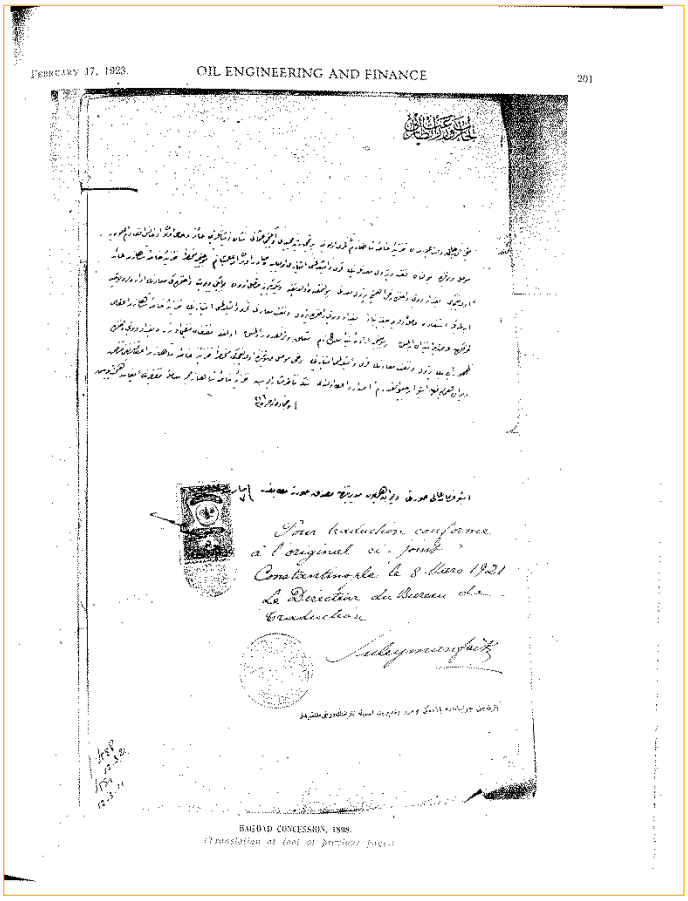
Second, by law and tradition Crown properties of the Ottoman Empire are not subject to taxes, titles, or Government duties, and they are immune from legal action of any kind. Properties administered by the Privy Purse or Civil List are subject to taxation and legal action in exactly the same manner as properties owned by ordinary Turkish subjects. The cost of the up-keep and care of Crown properties, and the payment of employees engaged on them, is defrayed directly by the Ministry of Finance, while properties of the Civil List are repaired and employees are paid from the Revenues of the Civil List Administration. This distinction was proved in fact by the action brought against Sultan Abdul Hamid personally by Taksin Pasha in the Civil Courts of Turkey in 1902. While pursuing our enquiries on this point we found that no less than 18 civil actions were instituted against the same Sultan during his reign in respect to the purchase of landed properties.

We may therefore assume that Abdul Hamid himself owned the Mesopotamian oil areas as an individual. Negotiations for the granting of rights to exploit the oilfields were conducted directly with the Sultan, through the Administration of the Civil List and not through the Administration of the Crown properties, up to the time of his deposition by the Young Turk Party in 1909.

German Option

The Germans were the first to conclude an arrangement with the Sultan, and in 1904 the representatives of the Anatolian Railway Company obtained an option for the purpose of examining the possibility of oil deposits in the Provinces of Mosul and Bagdad, and to prepare a scheme whereby they could be worked on joint account. In 1906 this option was considered at an end and the Sultan began other negotiations. At this time the field of competition was widened by the inclusion of a number of English, French and German interests. Among these was Mr. H. K. D'Arcy, of Anglo-Persian oil fame, who made an application to the Sultan for rights to exploit the oilfields. The British Ambassador in Constantinople gave strong official support to this application.

Mr. D'Arcy's chief competitors consisted of German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BAGDAD CONCESSION, 1898.
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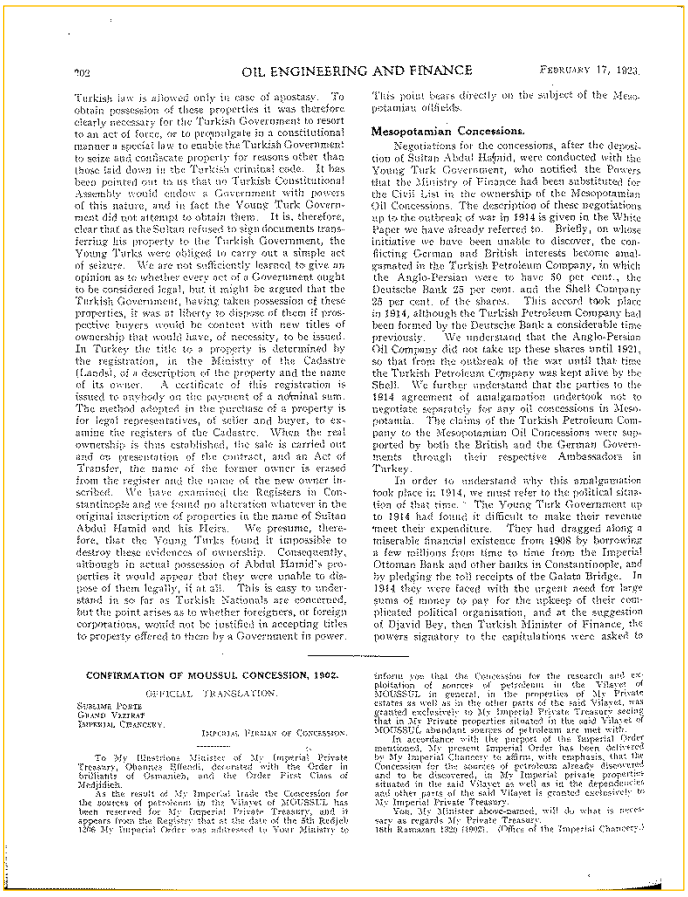
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Turkish law is allowed only in case of apostasy. To obtain possession of these properties it was therefore clearly necessary for the Turkish Government to resort to an act of force, or to promulgate in a constitutional manner a special law to enable the Turkish Government to seize and confiscate property for reasons other than those laid down in the Turkish criminal code. It has been pointed out to us that no Turkish Constitutional Assembly would endow a Government with powers of this nature, and in fact the Young Turk Government did not attempt to obtain them. It is, therefore, clear that as the Sultan refused to sign documents transferring his property to the Turkish Government, the Young Turks were obliged to carry out a simple act of seizure. We are not sufficiently learned to give an opinion as to whether every act of a Government ought to be considered legal, but it might be argued that the Turkish Government, having taken possession of these properties, it was at liberty to dispose of them if prospective buyers would be content with new titles of ownership that would have, of necessity, to be issued. In Turkey the title to a property is determined by the registration, in the Ministry of the Cadastre (Tandsi), of a description of the property and the name of its owner. A certificate of this registration is issued to anybody on the payment of a nominal sum. The method adopted in the purchase of a property is for legal representatives, of seller and buyer, to examine the registers of the Cadastre. When the real ownership is thus established, the sale is carried out and on presentation of the contract, and an Act of Transfer, the name of the former owner is erased from the register and the name of the new owner inscribed. We have examined the Registers in Constantinople and we found no alteration whatever in the original inscription of properties in the name of Sultan Abdul Hamid and his Heirs. We presume, therefore, that the Young Turks found it impossible to destroy these evidences of ownership. Consequently, although in actual possession of Abdul Hamid's properties it would appear that they were unable to dispose of them legally, if at all. This is easy to understand in so far as Turkish Nationals are concerned, but the point arises as to whether foreigners, or foreign corporations, would not be justified in accepting titles to property offered to them by a Government in power.

This point bears directly on the subject of the Mesopotamian oilfields.

Mesopotamian Concessions.

Negotiations for the concessions, after the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hafnid, were conducted with the Young Turk Government, who notified the Powers that the Ministry of Finance had been substituted for the Civil List in the ownership of the Mesopotamian Oil Concessions. The description of these negotiations up to the outbreak of war in 1914 is given in the White Paper we have already referred to. Briefly, on whose initiative we have been unable to discover, the conflicting German and British interests become amalgamated in the Turkish Petroleum Company, in which the Anglo-Persian were to have 50 per cent., the Deutsche Bank 25 per cent. and the Shell Company 25 per cent. of the shares. This accord took place in 1914, although the Turkish Petroleum Company had been formed by the Deutsche Bank a considerable time previously. We understand that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company did not take up these shares until 1920, so that from the outbreak of the war until that time the Turkish Petroleum Company was kept alive by the Shell. We further understand that the parties to the 1914 agreement of amalgamation undertook not to negotiate separately for any oil concessions in Mesopotamia. The claims of the Turkish Petroleum Company to the Mesopotamian Oil Concessions were supported by both the British and the German Governments through their respective Ambassadors in Turkey.

In order to understand why this amalgamation took place in 1914, we must refer to the political situation of that time. The Young Turk Government up to 1914 had found it difficult to make their revenue meet their expenditure. They had dragged along a miserable financial existence from 1908 by borrowing a few millions from time to time from the Imperial Ottoman Bank and other banks in Constantinople, and by pledging the toll receipts of the Galata Bridge. In 1914 they were faced with the urgent need for large sums of money to pay for the upkeep of their complicated political organisation, and at the suggestion of Djavid Bey, then Turkish Minister of Finance, the powers signatory to the capitulations were asked to

CONFIRMATION OF MOUSSUL CONCESSION, 1902.

OFFICIAL TRANSLATION.

SUBLIME PORTE
GRAND VEZIRAT
IMPERIAL CHANCERY.

IMPERIAL PERSIAN OF CONCESSION.

To My Illustrious Minister of My Imperial Private Treasury, Obannes Effendi, decorated with the Order in brilliants of Osmanieh, and the Order First Class of Medjidieh.

As the result of My Imperial Irade the Concession for the sources of petroleum in the Vilayet of MOUSSUL has been reserved for My Imperial Private Treasury, and it appears from the Registry that at the date of the 8th Redjeb 1296 My Imperial Order was addressed to Your Ministry to inform you that the Concession for the research and exploitation of sources of petroleum in the Vilayet of MOUSSUL in general, in the properties of My Private estates as well as in the other parts of the said Vilayet, was granted exclusively to My Imperial Private Treasury seeing that in My Private properties situated in the said Vilayet of MOUSSUL abundant sources of petroleum are met with.

In accordance with the purport of the Imperial Order mentioned, My present Imperial Order has been delivered by My Imperial Chancery to affirm, with emphasis, that the Concession for the sources of petroleum already discovered and to be discovered, in My Imperial private properties situated in the said Vilayet as well as in the dependencies and other parts of the said Vilayet is granted exclusively to My Imperial Private Treasury.

You, My Minister above-named, will do what is necessary as regards My Private Treasury.

18th Ramazan 1320 (1902). (Office of the Imperial Chancery.)

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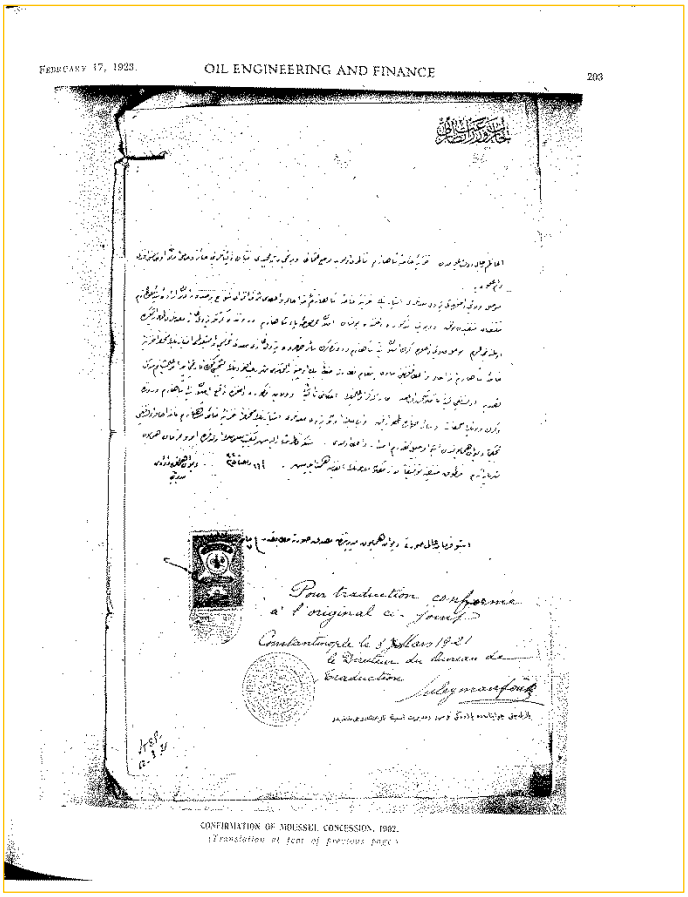
interests, represented by M. Hugenin, of the Bagdad Railway and the Deutsche Bank, who had the support of the German Ambassador, and another English Group which included powerful London financiers, Mexican oil and South African gold mining interests. Representatives of important French bankers, in Constantinople, were also competitors. All these groups applied to Sultan Abdul Hamid for concessionary rights in the Mesopotamian oilfields, either through their Embassies, or directly through the Director of the Sultan's Privy Purse.

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 was followed by the election of a National Assembly, and the adoption of a constitutional form of government, but the Sultan's right to deal with his own properties was not questioned until 1909, when he was imprisoned by the Young Turks in Salonika. He have been informed by members of the Sultan's family that he was continually pressed, and even threatened when he refused, by the Young Turk Government to sign legal transfers of all his property in favour of the Young Turk Government. This he refused consistently to do. With the deposition of the Sultan, his brother, Rechad, known as Sultan Mehmed, became the new Sultan. By command of the Young Turk Government, he signed an Imperial Order in 1909 authorising the Turkish Ministry of Finance to take possession of all properties acquired by the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid, and specific mention was made of lands, steamship, harbour, mining and oil concessions, acquired by him from the date of his succession to the throne in 1877. This was the second order regarding Sultan Abdul Hamid's properties issued since the advent of the Young Turk Government. The first was signed in 1908 by Abdul Hamid himself, and as these two orders have an important bearing on the whole question under discussion, we will examine them both in detail.



FEBRUARY 17, 1923. OIL ENGINEERING AND FINANCE 203

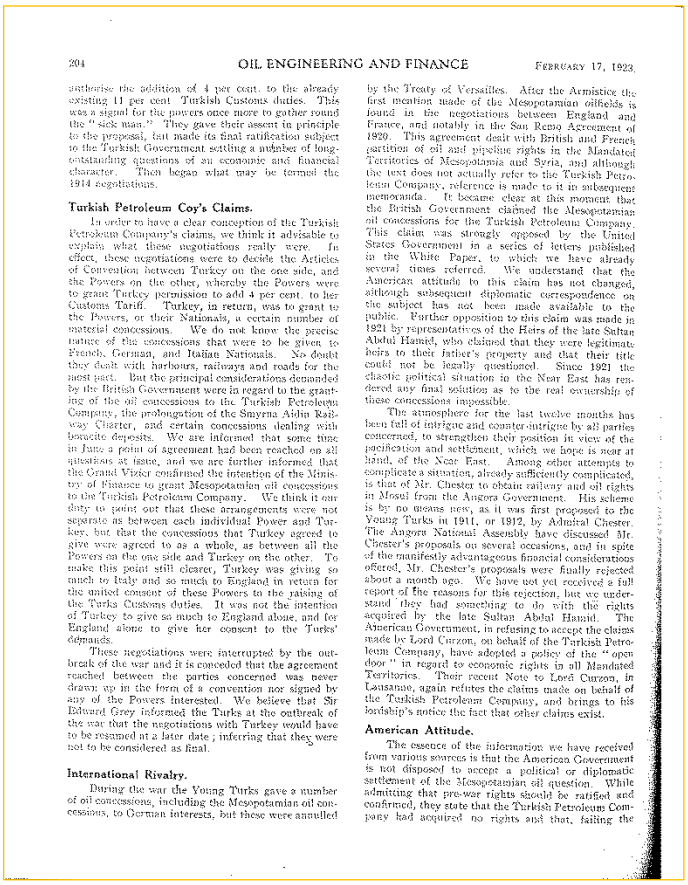
Pour traduction conforme
à l'original ci-joint
Constantinople le 5 Janvier 1921
Le Directeur du Bureau de
Traduction.

CONFIRMATION OF MOUSSEL CONCESSION, 1902.
(Translation of text of previous page.)

Sultan Dispossessed

The first order of 1908 refers to certain debts and to an accumulation of salaries owing to officials of the Civil List Administration, and it states that in order to liquidate these debts and to pay the official salaries due, certains properties, expressly referred to in a separate list, should be placed at the disposal of the Turkish Government. The text appears to be quite clear that the intention was to make over the properties themselves, but the attached list does not make this quite so clair, as it implies, in enumerating the properties, that in some cases the properties are handed over and in other only the revenues. This order, and the list accompanying it, deal with landed properties only, and no mention is made of any other kind of property. But there is an important consideration attached to this transfer. The total amount owed by the Sultan was somewhere about £1,000,000 (Turkish) and the order provides that the properties transferred shall be used for the purpose of obtaining a loan sufficient to cover this debt. The Ministry of Finance itself was to negotiate this loan on the security of the properties specified. We are informed, on good authority, that this money was never paid by the Turkish Ministry of Finance to the Civil List, but wether this fact would invalidate the Sultan's personal signature to a transfer of property is a question which we do not pretend to decide.

The second order, already referred to, and which was signed in 1909, dispossessed Sultan Abdul Hamid in one clean sweep of the whole of the properties acquired by him during his lifetime. In our search for documentary evidence we were



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authorise the addition of 4 per cent. to the already existing 11 per cent. Turkish Customs duties. This was a signal for the powers once more to gather round the "sick man." They gave their assent in principle to the proposal, but made its final ratification subject to the Turkish Government settling a number of long-outstanding questions of an economic and financial character. Then began what may be termed the 1914 negotiations.

Turkish Petroleum Coy's Claims.

In order to have a clear conception of the Turkish Petroleum Company's claims, we think it advisable to explain what these negotiations really were. In effect, these negotiations were to decide the Articles of Convention between Turkey on the one side, and the Powers on the other, whereby the Powers were to grant Turkey permission to add 4 per cent. to her Customs Tariff. Turkey, in return, was to grant to the Powers, or their Nationals, a certain number of material concessions. We do not know the precise nature of the concessions that were to be given to French, German, and Italian Nationals. No doubt they dealt with harbours, railways and roads for the most part. But the principal considerations demanded by the British Government were in regard to the granting of the oil concessions to the Turkish Petroleum Company, the prolongation of the Smyrna Aidin Railway Charter, and certain concessions dealing with boracite deposits. We are informed that some time in June a point of agreement had been reached on all questions at issue, and we are further informed that the Grand Vizier confirmed the intention of the Ministry of Finance to grant Mesopotamian oil concessions to the Turkish Petroleum Company. We think it our duty to point out that those arrangements were not separate as between each individual Power and Turkey, but that the concessions that Turkey agreed to give were agreed to as a whole, as between all the Powers on the one side and Turkey on the other. To make this point still clearer, Turkey was giving so much to Italy and so much to England in return for the united consent of these Powers to the raising of the Turks Customs duties. It was not the intention of Turkey to give so much to England alone, and for England alone to give her consent to the Turks' demands.

These negotiations were interrupted by the outbreak of the war and it is conceded that the agreement reached between the parties concerned was never drawn up in the form of a convention nor signed by any of the Powers interested. We believe that Sir Edward Grey informed the Turks at the outbreak of the war that the negotiations with Turkey would have to be resumed at a later date; inferring that they were not to be considered as final.

International Rivalry.

During the war the Young Turks gave a number of oil concessions, including the Mesopotamian oil concessions, to German interests, but these were annulled by the Treaty of Versailles. After the Armistice the first mention made of the Mesopotamian oilfields is found in the negotiations between England and France, and notably in the San Remo Agreement of 1920. This agreement dealt with British and French partition of oil and pipeline rights in the Mandated Territories of Mesopotamia and Syria, and although the text does not actually refer to the Turkish Petroleum Company, reference is made to it in subsequent memoranda. It became clear at this moment that the British Government claimed the Mesopotamian oil concessions for the Turkish Petroleum Company. This claim was strongly opposed by the United States Government in a series of letters published in the White Paper, to which we have already several times referred. We understand that the American attitude to this claim has not changed, although subsequent diplomatic correspondence on the subject has not been made available to the public. Further opposition to this claim was made in 1921 by representatives of the Heirs of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid, who claimed that they were legitimate heirs to their father's property and that their title could not be legally questioned. Since 1921 the chaotic political situation in the Near East has rendered any final solution as to the real ownership of these concessions impossible.

The atmosphere for the last twelve months has been full of intrigue and counter-intrigue by all parties concerned, to strengthen their position in view of the pacification and settlement, which we hope is near at hand, of the Near East. Among other attempts to complicate a situation, already sufficiently complicated, is that of Mr. Chester to obtain railway and oil rights in Mosul from the Angora Government. His scheme is by no means new, as it was first proposed to the Young Turks in 1911, or 1912, by Admiral Chester. The Angora National Assembly have discussed Mr. Chester's proposals on several occasions, and in spite of the manifestly advantageous financial considerations offered, Mr. Chester's proposals were finally rejected about a month ago. We have not yet received a full report of the reasons for this rejection, but we understand they had something to do with the rights acquired by the late Sultan Abdul Hamid. The American Government, in refusing to accept the claims made by Lord Curzon, on behalf of the Turkish Petroleum Company, have adopted a policy of the "open door" in regard to economic rights in all Mandated Territories. Their recent Note to Lord Curzon, in Lausanne, again refutes the claims made on behalf of the Turkish Petroleum Company, and brings to his lordship's notice the fact that other claims exist.

American Attitude.

The essence of the information we have received from various sources is that the American Government is not disposed to accept a political or diplomatic settlement of the Mesopotamian oil question. While admitting that pre-war rights should be ratified and confirmed, they state that the Turkish Petroleum Company had acquired no rights and that, failing the

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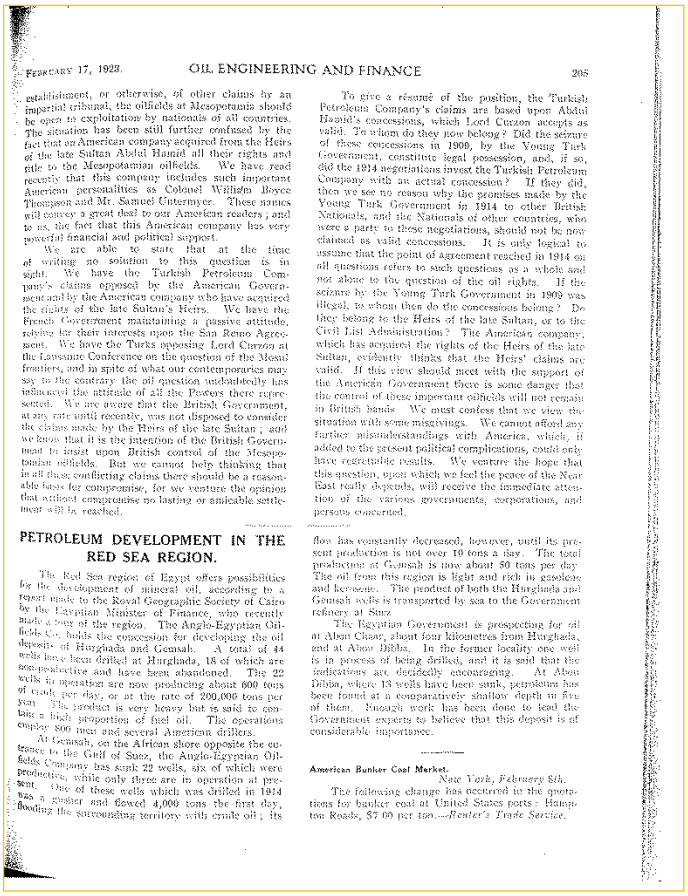
informed of this Imperial Order, and that, as such, it was law and would be included in the Law Summaries as is the custom and practise in Turkey. It is a curious fact, which we mention for what it is worth, that we were unable to trace the order of 1909 in the Official Summary of Laws. The point is, however, that on the issue of this order, or Irade, the whole of the documents dealing with the properties acquired by Sultan Abdul Hamid during his lifetime, were seized and placed in the archives of the Ministry of Finance which took possession, however, only of such properties as were situated within Young Turk zones of influence. We have discussed this Irade, from the point of view of law, with Turkish legal experts and we are informed that the Irade orders the "taking possession" of these properties, and the word "transfer" or "confiscation" are not mentioned.

It appears that a transfer of property under Turkish law is only valid when signed by the actual owner of the property dealt with. Confiscation under Turkish law is allowed only in case of apostasy. To obtain possession of these properties it was therefore clearly necessary for the Turkish Government to resort to an act of force, or to promulgate in a constitutional manner a special law to enable the Turkish Government to seize and confiscate property for reasons others than those laid down in the Turkish criminal code. It has been pointed out to us that no Turkish Constitutional Assembly would endow a Government with powers of this nature, and in fact the Young Turk Government did not attempt to obtain them. It is, therefore, clear that as the Sultan refused to sign documents transferring his property to the Turkish Government, the Young Turks were obliged to carry out a simple act of seizure. We are not sufficiently learned to give an opinion as to wether every act of a Government ought to be considered legal, but it might be argued that the Turkish Government, having taken possession of these properties, it was at liberty to dispose of them if prospective buyers would be content with new titles of ownership that would have, of necessity, to be issued. In Turkey, the title to a property is determined by the registration, in the Ministry of the Cadastre (Lands), of a description of the property and the name of its owner. A certificate of this registration is issued to anybody on the payment of a nominal sum. The method adopted in the purchase of a property is for legal representatives, of seller and buyer, to examine the registers of the Cadastre. When the real ownership is thus established, the sale is carried out and on presentation of the contract, and an Act of Transfer, the name of the former owner is erased from the register and the name of the new owner inscribed. We have examined the Registers in Constantinople and we found no alteration whatever in the original inscription of properties in the name of Sultan Abdul Hamid and his Heirs. We presume, therefore, that the Young Turks found it impossible to destroy these evidences of ownership. Consequently, although in actual possession of Abdul Hamid's properties it would appear that they were unable to dispose of them legally, if at all. This is easy to understand in so far as Turkish Nationals are concerned, but the point arises as to wether foreigners, or foreign corporations, would not be justified in accepting titles to property offered to them by a Government in power. This point bears directly on the subject of the Mesopotamian oilfields.



FEBRUARY 17, 1923. OIL ENGINEERING AND FINANCE 205

establishment, or otherwise, of other claims by an impartial tribunal, the oilfields at Mesopotamia should be open to exploitation by nationals of all countries. The situation has been still further confused by the fact that an American company acquired from the Heirs of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid all their rights and title to the Mesopotamian oilfields. We have read recently that this company includes such important American personalities as Colonel William Boyce Thompson and Mr. Samuel Untermyer. These names will convey a great deal to our American readers; and to us, the fact that this American company has very powerful financial and political support.

We are able to state that at the time of writing no solution to this question is in sight. We have the Turkish Petroleum Company's claims opposed by the American Government and by the American company who have acquired the rights of the late Sultan's Heirs. We have the French Government maintaining a passive attitude, relying for their interests upon the San Remo Agreement. We have the Turks opposing Lord Curzon at the Lausanne Conference on the question of the Mosul frontiers, and in spite of what our contemporaries may say to the contrary the oil question undoubtedly has influenced the attitude of all the Powers there represented. We are aware that the British Government, at any rate until recently, was not disposed to consider the claims made by the Heirs of the late Sultan; and we know that it is the intention of the British Government to insist upon British control of the Mesopotamian oilfields. But we cannot help thinking that in all these conflicting claims there should be a reasonable basis for compromise, for we venture the opinion that without compromise no lasting or amicable settlement will be reached.

To give a résumé of the position, the Turkish Petroleum Company's claims are based upon Abdul Hamid's concessions, which Lord Curzon accepts as valid. To whom do they now belong? Did the seizure of these concessions in 1909, by the Young Turk Government, constitute legal possession, and, if so, did the 1914 negotiations invest the Turkish Petroleum Company with an actual concession? If they did, then we see no reason why the promises made by the Young Turk Government in 1914 to other British Nationals, and the Nationals of other countries, who were a party to these negotiations, should not be now claimed as valid concessions. It is only logical to assume that the point of agreement reached in 1914 on all questions refers to such questions as a whole and not alone to the question of the oil rights. If the seizure by the Young Turk Government in 1909 was illegal, to whom then do the concessions belong? Do they belong to the Heirs of the late Sultan, or to the Civil List Administration? The American company, which has acquired the rights of the Heirs of the late Sultan, evidently thinks that the Heirs' claims are valid. If this view should meet with the support of the American Government there is some danger that the control of these important oilfields will not remain in British hands. We must confess that we view the situation with some misgivings. We cannot afford any further misunderstandings with America, which, if added to the present political complications, could only have regrettable results. We venture the hope that this question, upon which we feel the peace of the Near East really depends, will receive the immediate attention of the various governments, corporations, and persons concerned.

PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT IN THE RED SEA REGION.

The Red Sea region of Egypt offers possibilities for the development of mineral oil, according to a report made to the Royal Geographic Society of Cairo by the Egyptian Minister of Finance, who recently made a tour of the region. The Anglo-Egyptian Oilfields Co. holds the concession for developing the oil deposits of Hurghada and Gemsah. A total of 44 wells have been drilled at Hurghada, 18 of which are non-productive and have been abandoned. The 22 wells in operation are now producing about 600 tons of crude per day, or at the rate of 200,000 tons per year. The product is very heavy but is said to contain a high proportion of fuel oil. The operations employ 800 men and several American drillers.

At Gemsah, on the African shore opposite the entrance to the Gulf of Suez, the Anglo-Egyptian Oilfields Company has sunk 22 wells, six of which were productive, while only three are in operation at present. One of these wells which was drilled in 1914 was a gusher and flowed 4,000 tons the first day, flooding the surrounding territory with crude oil; its flow has constantly decreased, however, until its present production is not over 10 tons a day. The total production of Gemsah is now about 50 tons per day. The oil from this region is light and rich in gasoline and kerosene. The product of both the Hurghada and Gemsah wells is transported by sea to the Government refinery at Suez.

The Egyptian Government is prospecting for oil at Abou Chaar, about four kilometres from Hurghada, and at Abou Dibba. In the former locality one well is in process of being drilled, and it is said that the indications are decidedly encouraging. At Abou Dibba, where 13 wells have been sunk, petroleum has been found at a comparatively shallow depth in five of them. Enough work has been done to lead the Government experts to believe that this deposit is of considerable importance.

American Bunker Coal Market.

New York, February 8th.

The following change has occurred in the quotations for bunker coal at United States ports: Hampton Roads, $7 00 per ton.—*Reuter's Trade Service.*

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Mesopotamian Concessions

Negotiations for the concessions, after the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid, were conducted with the Young Turk Government, who notified the Powers that the Ministry of Finance had been substituted for the Civil List in the ownership of the Mesopotamian Oil Concessions. The description of these negotiations up to the outbreak of war in 1914 is given in the White Paper we have already referred to. Briefly, on whose initiative we have been unable to discover, the conflicting German and British interests become amalgamated in the Turkish Petroleum Company, in which the Anglo-Persian were to have 50 per cent, the Deutsche Bank 25 per cent, and the Shell Company 25 per cent of the shares. This accord took place in 1914, although the Turkish Petroleum Company had been formed by the Deutsche Bank a considerable time previously. We understand that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company did not take up these shares until 1921, so that from the outbreak of the war until that time the Turkish Petroleum Company was kept alive by the Shell. We further understand that the parties to the 1914 agreement of amalgamation undertook not to negotiate separately for any oil concessions in Mesopotamia. The claims of the Turkish Petroleum Company to the Mesopotamian Oil Concessions were supported by both the British and German Governments through their respective Ambassadors in Turkey.

In order to understand why this amalgamation took place in 1914, we must refer to the political situation of that time. The Young Turk Government up to 1914 had found it difficult to make their revenues meet their expenditure. They had dragged along a miserable financial existence from 1908 by borrowing a few millions from time to time from the Imperial Ottoman Bank and other banks in Constantinople, and by pledging the toll receipts of the Galata Bridge. In 1914, they were faced with the urgent need for large sums of money to pay for the upkeep of their complicated political organisation, and at the suggestion of Djavid Bey, then Turkish Minister of Finance, the powers signatory to the capitulations were asked to authorise the addition of 4 per cent to the already existing 11 per cent. Turkish Customs duties. This was a signal for the powers once more to gather round the “sick man”. They gave their assent in principle to the proposal, but made its final ratification subject to the Turkish Government settling a number of long-outstanding questions of an economic and financial character. Then began what may be termed the 1914 negotiations.

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OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT, « The Mesopotamian Oilfields », *Oil Engineering and Finance*, 530 Abbey House, Victoria St., London, S. W. 1, England, 17 February 1923, p. 197-205.

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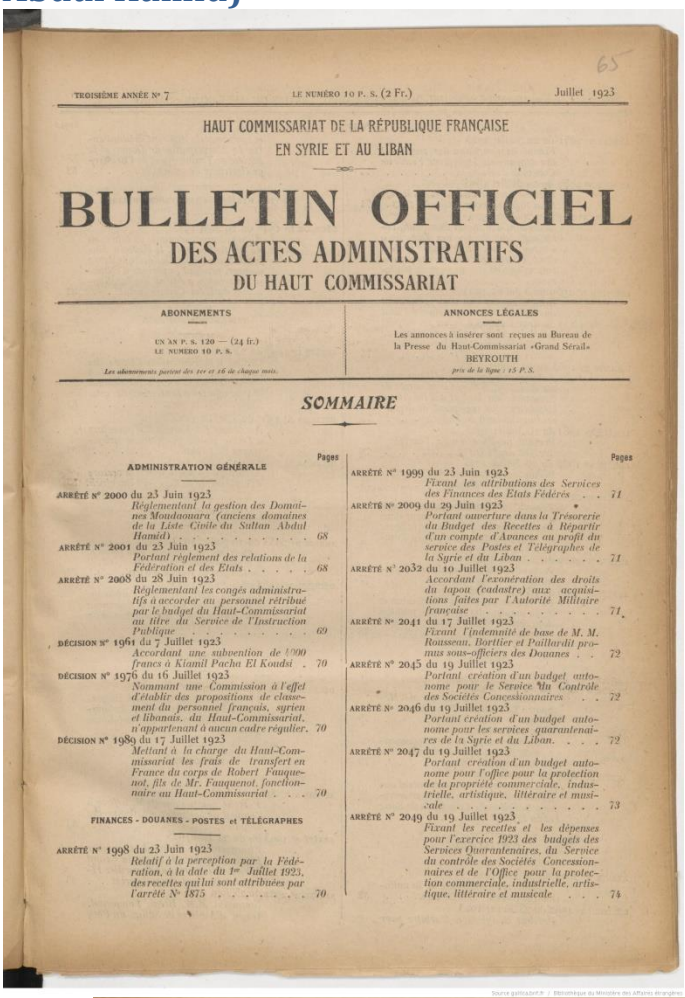
1923-06-23 : Arrêté du Haut-Commissaire en Syrie et au Liban réglementant la gestion des Domaines *Moudawara* (anciens domaines de la Liste Civile du Sultan Abdul Hamid)



TROISIÈME ANNÉE N° 7 — LE NUMÉRO 10 P. S. (2 Fr.) — Juillet 1923

HAUT COMMISSARIAT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
EN SYRIE ET AU LIBAN

BULLETIN OFFICIEL
DES ACTES ADMINISTRATIFS
DU HAUT COMMISSARIAT

ABONNEMENTS
UN AN P. S. 120 — (24 fr.)
LE NUMERO 10 P. S.
Les abonnements partent des 1er et 16 de chaque mois.

ANNONCES LÉGALES
Les annonces à insérer sont reçues au Bureau de la Presse du Haut-Commissariat «Grand Sérail» BEYROUTH
prix de la ligne : 15 P. S.

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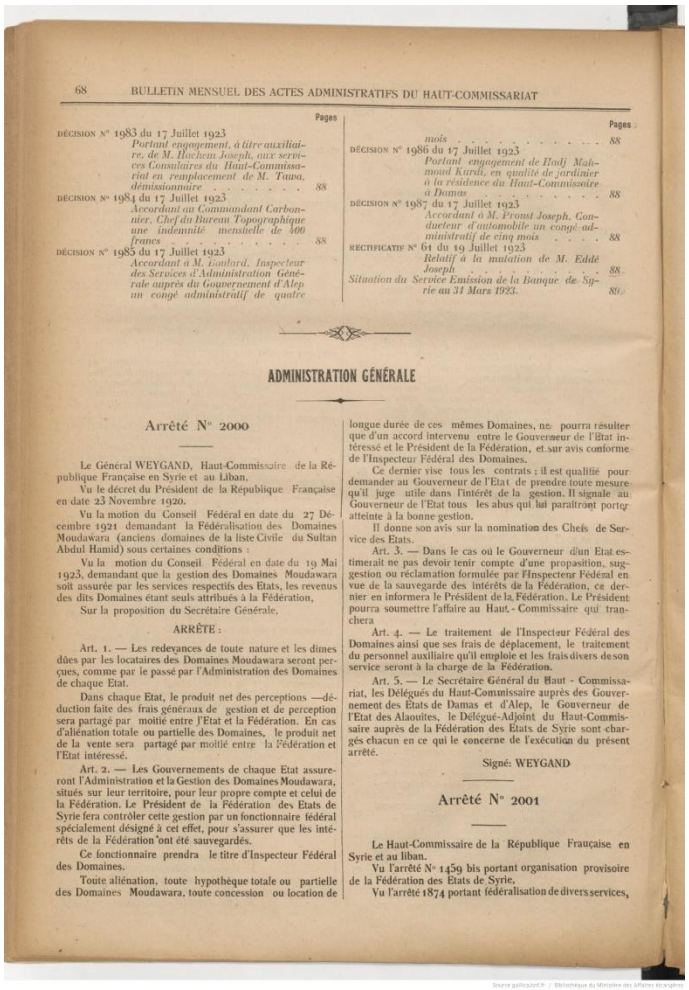

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Arrêté N° 2000

Le Général WEYGAND, Haut-Commissaire de la République Française en Syrie et au Liban,

Vu le décret du Président de la République Française en date 23 Novembre 1920.

Vu la motion du Conseil Fédéral en date du 27 Décembre 1921 demandant la Fédéralisation des Domaines Moudawara (anciens domaines de la liste Civile du Sultan Abdul Hamid) sous certaines conditions :

Vu la motion du Conseil Fédéral en date du 19 Mai 1923, demandant que la gestion des Domaines Moudawara soit assurée par les services respectifs des Etats, les revenus des dits Domaines étant seuls attribués à la Fédération,

Sur la proposition du Secrétaire Générale,

ARRÊTE :

Art. 1. — Les redevances de toute nature et les dimes dûes par les locataires des Domaines Moudawara seront perçues, comme par le passé par l'Administration des Domaines de chaque Etat.

Dans chaque Etat, le produit net des perceptions —déduction faite des frais généraux de gestion et de perception sera partagé par moitié entre l'Etat et la Fédération. En cas d'aliénation totale ou partielle des Domaines, le produit net de la vente sera partagé par moitié entre la Fédération et l'Etat intéressé.

Art. 2. — Les Gouvernements de chaque Etat assureront l'Administration et la Gestion des Domaines Moudawara, situés sur leur territoire, pour leur propre compte et celui de la Fédération. Le Président de la Fédération des Etats de Syrie fera contrôler cette gestion par un fonctionnaire fédéral spécialement désigné à cet effet, pour s'assurer que les intérêts de la Fédération ont été sauvegardés.

Ce fonctionnaire prendra le titre d'Inspecteur Fédéral des Domaines.

Toute aliénation, toute hypothèque totale ou partielle des Domaines Moudawara, toute concession ou location de longue durée de ces mêmes Domaines, ne pourra résulter que d'un accord intervenu entre le Gouverneur de l'Etat intéressé et le Président de la Fédération, et sur avis conforme de l'Inspecteur Fédéral des Domaines.

Ce dernier vise tous les contrats ; il est qualifié pour demander au Gouverneur de l'Etat de prendre toute mesure qu'il juge utile dans l'intérêt de la gestion. Il signale au Gouverneur de l'Etat tous les abus qui lui paraîtront porter atteinte à la bonne gestion.

Il donne son avis sur la nomination des Chefs de Service des Etats.

Art. 3. — Dans le cas où le Gouverneur d'un Etat estimerait ne pas devoir tenir compte d'une proposition, suggestion ou réclamation formulée par l'Inspecteur Fédéral en vue de la sauvegarde des intérêts de la Fédération, ce dernier en informera le Président de la Fédération. Le Président pourra soumettre l'affaire au Haut-Commissaire qui tranchera

Art. 4. — Le traitement de l'Inspecteur Fédéral des Domaines ainsi que ses frais de déplacement, le traitement du personnel auxiliaire qu'il emploie et les frais divers de son service seront à la charge de la Fédération.

Art. 5. — Le Secrétaire Général du Haut - Commissariat, les Délégués du Haut-Commissaire auprès des Gouvernement des Etats de Damas et d'Alep, le Gouverneur de l'Etat des Alaouites, le Délégué-Adjoint du Haut-Commissaire auprès de la Fédération des Etats de Syrie sont chargés chacun en ce qui le concerne de l'exécution du présent arrêté.

Signé: WEYGAND

Arrêté N° 2001

Le Haut-Commissaire de la République Fraucaise en Syrie et au liban.

Vu l'arrêté N° 1459 bis portant organisation provisoire de la Fédération des Etats de Syrie,

Vu l'arrêté 1874 portant fédéralisation de divers services,

Arrêté N° 2000

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Ce fonctionnaire prendra le titre d'Inspecteur Fédéral des Domaines.

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Ce dernier vise tous les contrats ; il est qualifié pour demander au Gouverneur de l'Etat de prendre toute mesure qu'il juge utile dans l'intérêt de la gestion. Il signale au Gouverneur de l'Etat tous les abus qui lui paraîtront porter atteinte à la bonne gestion.

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Vu l'arrêté 1874 portant fédéralisation de divers services,

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ARRÊTÉ N° 2000 du 23 Juin 1923
Réglementant la gestion des Domaines Moudawara
(anciens domaines de la Liste Civile du Sultan Abdul Hamid)

Arrêté N° 2000

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Ce dernier vise tous les contrats ; il est qualifié pour demander au Gouverneur de l'Etat de prendre toute mesure qu'il juge utile dans l'intérêt de la gestion. Il signale au Gouverneur de l'Etat tous les abus qui, lui paraîtront porter atteinte à la bonne gestion.

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Signé : **WEYGAND**

———

« ARRÊTÉ N° 2000 du 23 Juin 1923 Réglementant la gestion des Domaines Moudawara (anciens domaines de la Liste Civile du Sultan Abdul Hamid) ». *Bulletin mensuel* ["puis" officiel] *des actes administratifs du Haut Commissariat 1923-07*, 3ème année, N°7. Beyrouth, juillet 1923. Bibliothèque du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 2012-277842. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Identifiant : ark:/12148/bpt6k6487014k. URL : http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6487014k. Page 68.

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1925-04-26 : Mouvements des cours

Mouvements des cours

— Dans le groupe des fonds étrangers, il faut noter une très vive amélioration des fonds turcs motivée par le fait que le professeur Eugène Borel, arbitre chargé par la Société des Nations de statuer sur les différends relatifs à la répartition des annuités de la Dette publique ottomane, a déposé le 20 avril, à Genève, entre les mains du secrétaire général de la Société des Nations, l'exemplaire original de la sentence arbitrale qu'il a rendue. Cette sentence statue suc tous les points en litige entre les Etats intéressés, sur une superficie qui va de la Tripolitaine aux frontières de la Perse, pour des différends allant du chemin de fer du Hedjaz aux biens et propriétés de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid et permet d'entrevoir le prochain règlement de différentes questions susceptibles d'influer sur la tenue des Rentes ottomanes.

MOUVEMENT DES COURS

— L'ambiance favorable a exercé ses répercussions sur le groupe des *Rentes françaises* : comme précédemment, l'amélioration a porté sur les *amortissables*. — Les *fonds gagés par des annuités de l'Etat* et les *fonds coloniaux* sont toujours très calmes. — Marché animé sur les *Bons et Obligations du Crédit National*.

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Parti social français, 1925, « Mouvements des cours », *Le Petit journal*, 26 avr. 1925 p. 5. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k629170w

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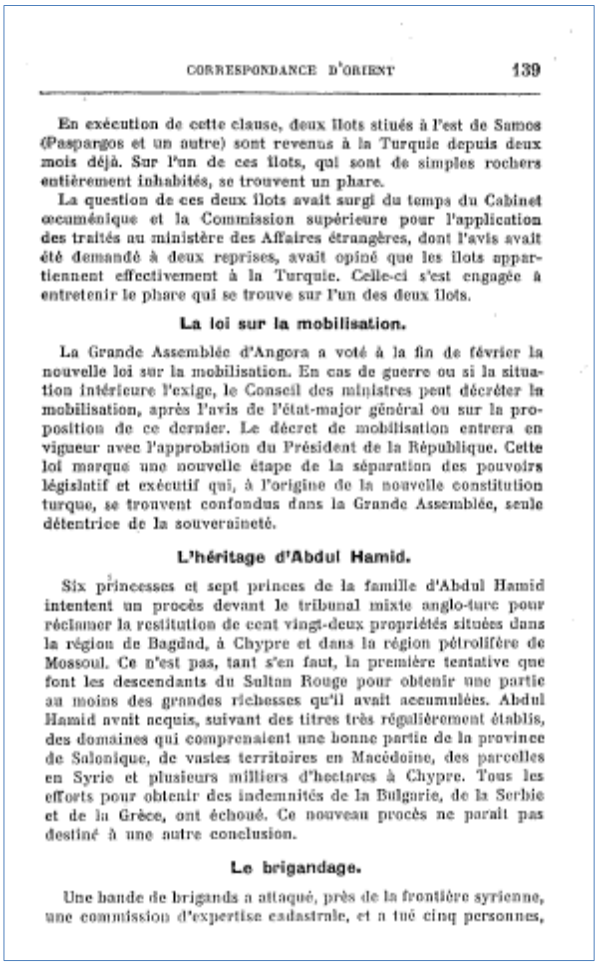
1928-03-01 : L'héritage d'Abdul Hamid

L'héritage d'Abdul Hamid.

Six princesses et sept princes de la famille d'Abdul Hamid intentent un procès devant le tribunal mixte anglo-turc pour réclamer la restitution de cent vingt-deux propriétés situées dans la région de Bagdad, à Chypre et dans la région pétrolière de Mossoul. Ce n'est pas, tant s'en faut, la première tentative que font les descendants du Sultan Rouge pour obtenir une partie au moins des grandes richesses qu'il avait accumulées. Abdul Hamid avait acquis, suivant des titres très régulièrement établis, des domaines qui comprenaient une bonne partie de la province de Salonique, de vastes territoires en Macédoine, des parcelles en Syrie et plusieurs milliers d'hectares à Chypre. Tous les efforts pour obtenir des indemnités de la Bulgarie, de la Serbie et de la Grèce, ont échoué. Ce nouveau procès ne paraît pas destine à une autre conclusion.



CORRESPONDANCE D'ORIENT 139

En exécution de cette clause, deux îlots situés à l'est de Samos (Paspargos et un autre) sont revenus à la Turquie depuis deux mois déjà. Sur l'un de ces îlots, qui sont de simples rochers entièrement inhabités, se trouvent un phare.

La question de ces deux îlots avait surgi du temps du Cabinet œcuménique et la Commission supérieure pour l'application des traités au ministère des Affaires étrangères, dont l'avis avait été demandé à deux reprises, avait opiné que les îlots appartiennent effectivement à la Turquie. Celle-ci s'est engagée à entretenir le phare qui se trouve sur l'un des deux îlots.

La loi sur la mobilisation.

La Grande Assemblée d'Angora a voté à la fin de février la nouvelle loi sur la mobilisation. En cas de guerre ou si la situation intérieure l'exige, le Conseil des ministres peut décréter la mobilisation, après l'avis de l'état-major général ou sur la proposition de ce dernier. Le décret de mobilisation entrera en vigueur avec l'approbation du Président de la République. Cette loi marque une nouvelle étape de la séparation des pouvoirs législatif et exécutif qui, à l'origine de la nouvelle constitution turque, se trouvent confondus dans la Grande Assemblée, seule détentrice de la souveraineté.

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Le brigandage.

Une bande de brigands a attaqué, près de la frontière syrienne, une commission d'expertise cadastrale, et a tué cinq personnes,

« L'héritage d'Abdul Hamid », *Correspondance d'Orient : revue économique, politique & littéraire* / directeurs : Chekri-Ganem, Dr Georges Samné, 1928, mars 1928, n° 363, Mars 1928, 20e Année, p. 139.

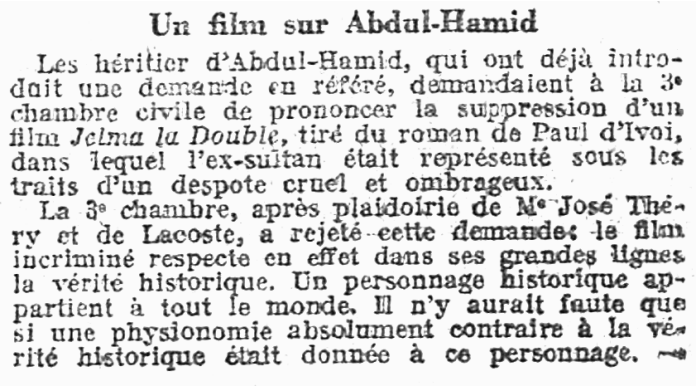
JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1928-03-20: Un film sur Abdul-Hamid

Un film sur Abdul-Hamid

Les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid, qui ont déjà introduit une demande en référé, demandaient à la chambre civile de prononcer la suppression d'un film *Jelma la Double*, tiré du roman de Paul d'Ivoi, dans lequel l'ex-sultan était représenté sous les traits d'un despote cruel et ombrageux.

La 3e chambre, après plaidoirie de Me José Théry et de Lacoste, a rejeté cette demande : le film incriminé respecte en effet dans ses grandes lignes la vérité historique. Un personnage historique appartient à tout le monde. Il n'y aurait faute que si une physionomie absolument contraire à la vérité historique était donnée à ce personnage.



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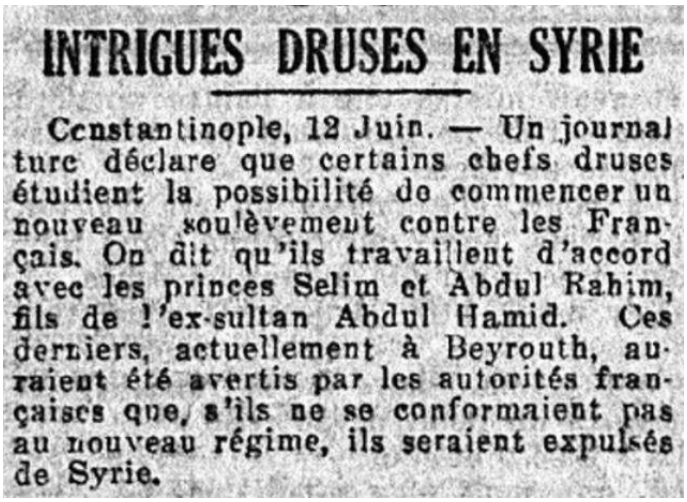
ACTION FRANÇAISE, « Un film sur Abdul Hamid », *L'Action française : organe du nationalisme intégral* / directeur politique : Henri Vaugeois ; rédacteur en chef : Léon Daudet, Paris, édition 20 mars 1928 (Numéro 80), sect. Tribunaux, 20 mars 1928. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7633557. page 2.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1928-06-13 : Intrigues Druses en Syrie

Intrigues Druses en Syrie

Constantinople, 12 Juin. — Un journal turc déclare que certains chefs, druses étudient la possibilité de commencer un nouveau soulèvement contre les Français. On dit qu'ils travaillent d'accord avec les princes Selim et Abdul Rahim, fils de !'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid. Ces derniers, actuellement à Beyrouth, auraient été avertis par les autorités françaises qu'ils ne se conformaient pas au nouveau régime, ils seraient expulsés de Syrie.



INTRIGUES DRUSES EN SYRIE

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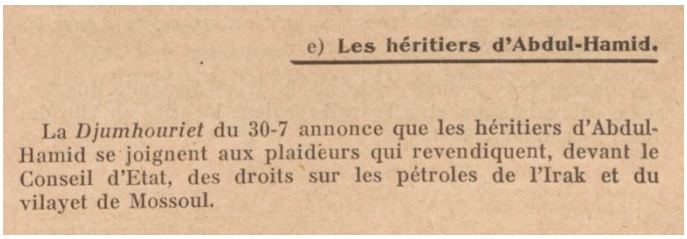
Parti social français, 1928, « Intrigues Druses en Syrie », Le Petit journal, 13 juin 1928 p. 3. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6303187

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1928-07-26 : Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid

Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid

La *Djumhouriet* du 30-7 annonce que les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid se joignent aux plaideurs qui revendiquent, devant le Conseil d'Etat, des droits sur les pétroles de l'Irak et du vilayet de Mossoul.



e) **Les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid.**

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FRANCE MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES et FRANCE MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE, « Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid », Bulletin périodique de la presse turque du 26 juillet au 31 aout 1928, n° 62 (octobre 1928). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6243890w/f3.image . Consulté le 29 janvier 2020, p. 3.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1928-07-30: Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid réclament leur fortune

Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid réclament leur fortune

Mais les biens de l'ancien sultan couvrent des pays entiers

Londres, 30 Juillet.

On mande d'Athènes au Daily Mail que les héritiers du dernier sultan Abdul Hamid de Turquie font entendre une protestation véhémente en vue de rentrer en possession des biens de leur famille.

Durant les 30 années que dura son règne, Abdul Hamid avait acquis une fortune pouvant être évaluée à 920 millions de francs et comprenant en outre des terrains immenses. Ses terres comprenaient près de la moitié de la province de Salonique, une grande partie de la Macédoine, de larges portions de la Syrie, Mossoul et de vastes terrains à Chypre.

C'est en décembre 1922 que Mr Irwin Untermeyer, l'homme de loi américain, venait en Europe pour présenter à la Conférence de Lausanne les revendications de 22 princes et princesses turques,

héritiers d'Abdul Hamid. Il s'agissait d'une propriété sise en Mésopotamie et percée de puits à pétrole. Sa valeur pouvait être estimée à plus de 25 milliards de francs.

Un procès avec l'Angleterre

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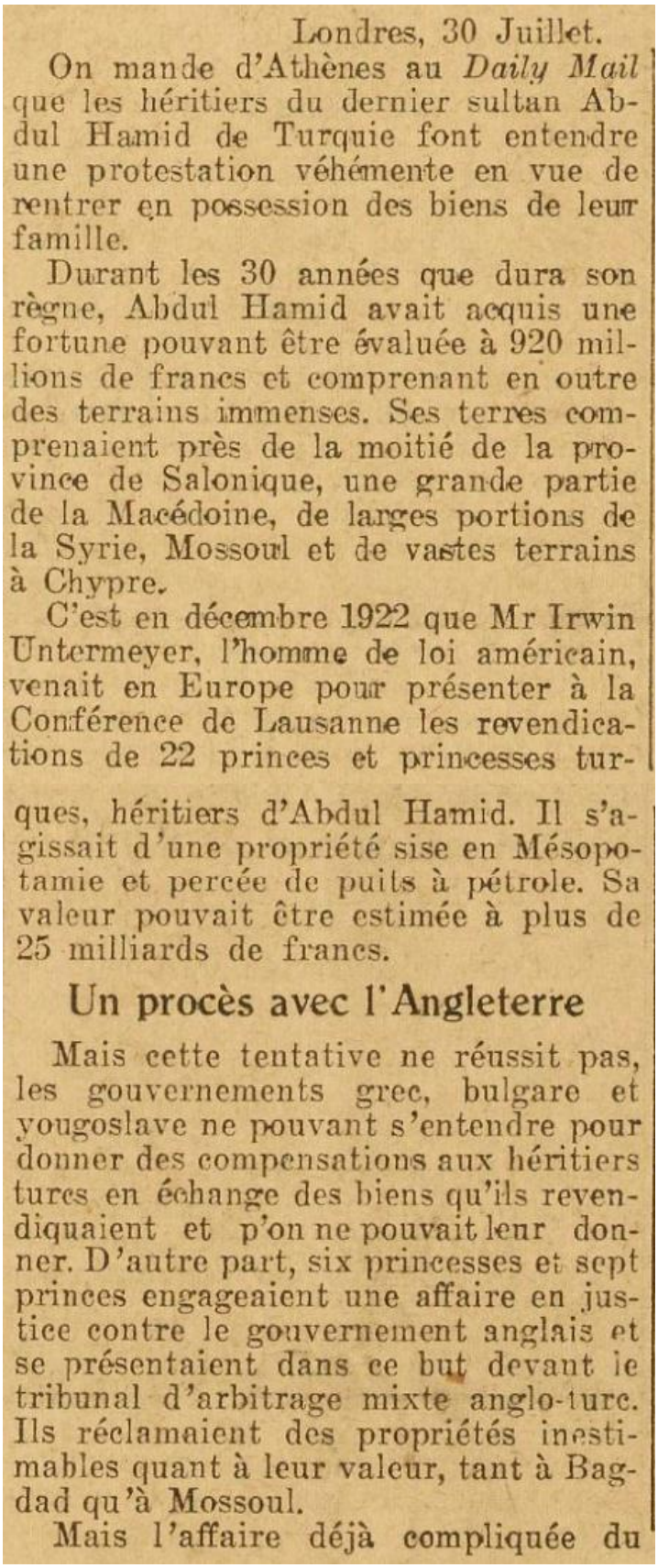

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Durant les 30 années que dura son règne, Abdul Hamid avait acquis une fortune pouvant être évaluée à 920 millions de francs et comprenant en outre des terrains immenses. Ses terres comprenaient près de la moitié de la province de Salonique, une grande partie de la Macédoine, de larges portions de la Syrie, Mossoul et de vastes terrains à Chypre.

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Un acquittement à l'unanimité

Le major Bennet vient d'être acquitté à l'unanimité des membres de la Cour des enquêtes.

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Mais les biens de l'ancien sultan couvrent des pays entiers

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« Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid réclament leur fortune », *Paris-midi : seul journal quotidien paraissant à midi* / dir. Maurice de Waleffe -- 1928-07-30 -- periodiques, Paris, édition 30 juillet 1928. 18e année, No.1075, 30 juillet 1928. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4730995w. p. 1.

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1928-12-22 : Turkish Plot. Authorities are Silent. Alarmist Rumors

TURKISH PLOT

Authorities are Silent

ALARMIST RUMORS

(Published in the 'Times.')

CONSTANTINOPLE. Dec 21.

Owing to the refusal of the authorities to provide definite information, alarmist rumors are current regarding the plot against the Government, The police only admit that many arrests have been made, Including women, but add that many of the arrested persons have been liberated.

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"TURKISH PLOT. Authorities are Silent. Alarmist Rumors". *Daily News* (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950), Saturday 22 December 1928, page 2

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1928-12-30: À L'ÉTRANGER – Turquie

À L'ÉTRANGER

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Une revendication des héritiers de l'ancien Sultan Abdul Hamid concernant les champs pétrolifères de Moussoul

LONDRES, — Suivant un message à la « British United Presse » de Constantinople, dix-neuf héritiers de l'ancien Sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid viennent de saisir le conseil d'État ottoman d'une revendication concernant la possession des champs pétrolifères de Mossoul actuellement exploités par la « *Turkish Petrolum Compagny*. »

La décision du Conseil d'État ottoman est attendue avec d'autant plus de curiosité que les fonds d'exploitation de la société ont été en grande partie, fournis par des capitalistes anglais, français et américains.

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1929-10 : La famille d'Abdul-Hamid

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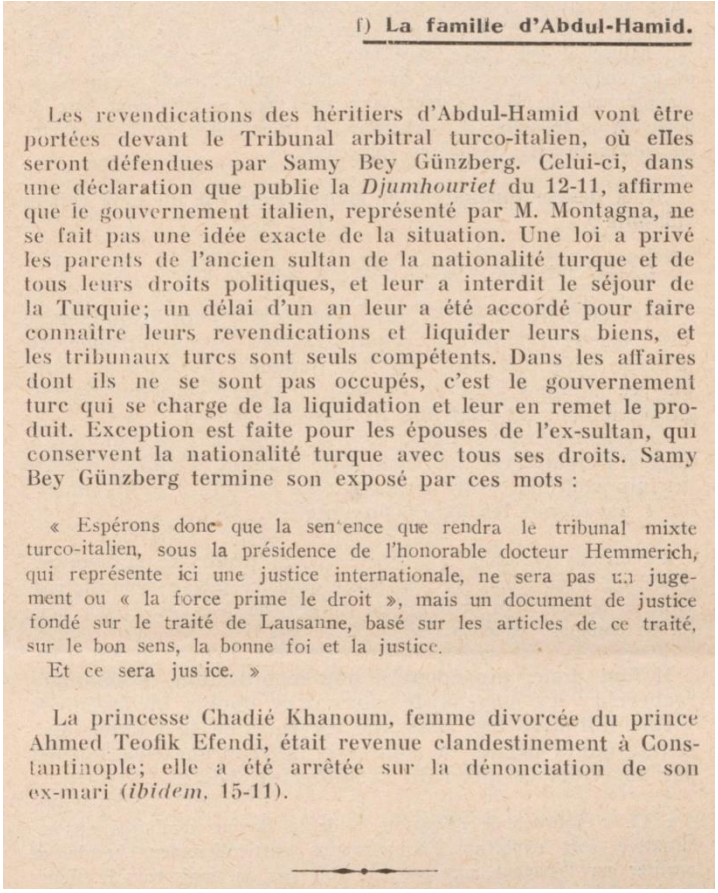
Les revendications des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid vont être portées devant le Tribunal arbitral turco-italien, où elles seront défendues par Samy Bey Günzberg. Celui-ci, dans une déclaration que publie la *Djumhouriet* du 12-11, affirme que le gouvernement italien, représenté par M. Montagna, ne se fait pas une idée exacte de la situation. Une loi a privé les parents de l'ancien sultan de la nationalité turque et de tous leurs droits politiques, et leur a interdit le séjour de la Turquie; un délai d'un an leur a été accordé pour faire connaître leurs revendications et liquider leurs biens, et les tribunaux turcs sont seuls compétents. Dans les affaires dont ils ne se sont pas occupés, c'est le gouvernement turc qui se charge de la liquidation et leur en remet le produit. Exception est faite pour les épouses de l'ex-sultan, qui conservent la nationalité turque avec tous ses droits. Samy Bey Günzberg termine son exposé par ces mots :

« Espérons donc que la sentence que rendra le tribunal mixte turco-italien, sous la présidence de l'honorable docteur Hemmerich ; qui représente ici une justice internationale, ne sera pas un jugement ou « la force prime le droit », mais un document de justice fondé sur le traité de Lausanne, basé sur les articles de ce traité, sur le bon sens, la bonne foi et la justice.

Et ce sera justice. »

La princesse Chadié Khanoum, femme divorcée du prince Ahmed Teofik Efendi, était revenue clandestinement à Constantinople ; elle a été arrêtée sur la dénonciation de son ex-mari (*ibidem*, 15-11).



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FRANCE MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES et FRANCE. MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE, « La famille d'Abdul Hamid », Bulletin périodique de la presse turque du 26 octobre au 4 décembre 1929, n° 73 (janvier 1930). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k62439017. Consulté le 29 janvier 2020, p. 3.

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1929-11-15 : A Dangerous Move

A Dangerous Move

PETROLEUM is of such outstanding importance to the great Powers that the struggle for control of supplies is a dominating factor in international politics. Although it may not be generally recognised, Mesopotamian oil played a most important — perhaps the main— part in causing the war of 1914-18.

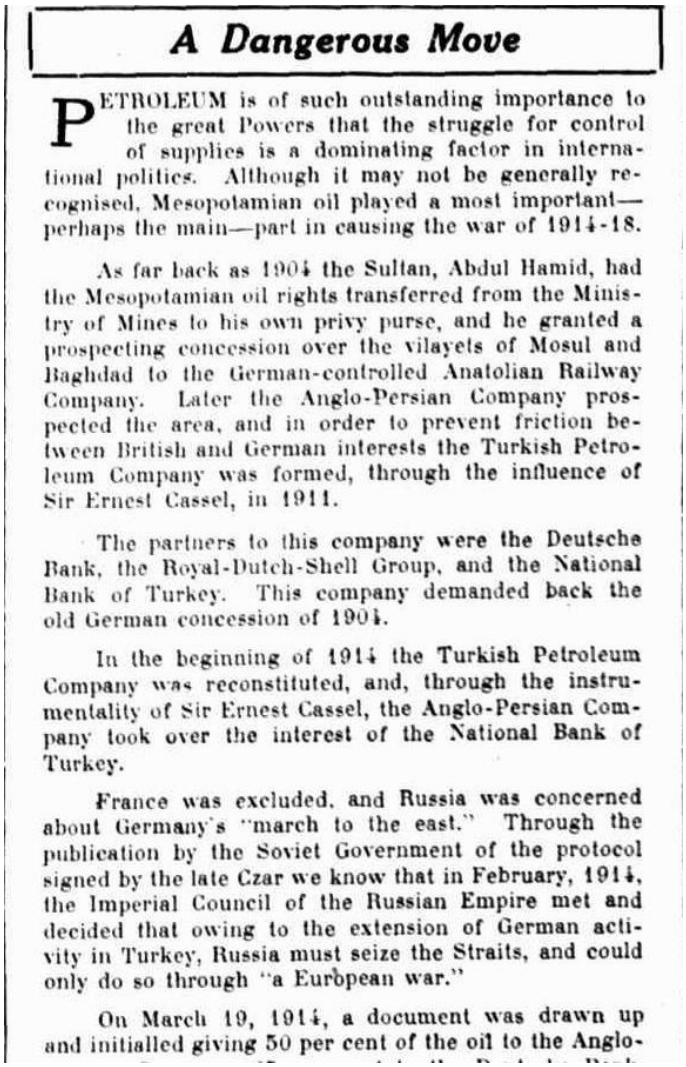
As far back as 1904 the Sultan, Abdul Hamid, had the Mesopotamian oil rights transferred from the Ministry of Mines to his own privy purse, and he granted a prospecting concession over the vilayets of Mosul and Baghdad to the German-controlled Anatolian Railway Company. Later the Anglo-Persian Company prospected the area, and in order to prevent friction between British and German interests the Turkish Petroleum Company was formed, through the influence of Sir Ernest Cassel, in 1911.

The partners to this company were the Deutsche Rank, the Royal-Dutch-Shell Group, and the National Bank of Turkey. This company demanded back the old German concession of 1901.

In the beginning of 1914 the Turkish Petroleum Company was reconstituted, and, through the instrumentality of Sir Ernest Cassel, the Anglo-Persian Company took over the interest of the National Bank of Turkey.

France was excluded, and Russia was concerned about Germany's "march to the east." Through the publication by the Soviet Government of the protocol signed by the late Czar we know that in February, 1914, the Imperial Council of the Russian Empire met and decided that owing to the extension of German activity in Turkey, Russia must seize the Straits, and could only do so through "a European war."

On March 19, 1014, a document was drawn up and initialled giving 50 per cent of the oil to the Anglo-Persian Company,



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Before this had become a formal treaty the little diversion at Serajevo was staged, and followed on July 31, 1914, by an announcement of a general mobilisation of the Russian army and navy. The rest is too well known to require recapitulation here, but it is interesting to note that Russia was promised Constantinople as a prize by Britain and France.

The coming of peace and the Russian Revolution altered the whole position, and Mosul became again the basis of international diplomatic conflict. In April, 1920, the French were consigned the 25 per cent interest of the Turkish Petroleum Company. America then exerted the pressure which her post-war position made possible, and the risk of a breach with America was so serious that the Anglo-Persian Company was advised to offer half its 50 per cent share to the American interests.

Thus ended a 24 years' struggle for the oil rights of Mesopotamia—a struggle one of the effects of which was the greatest-war of all lime.

We have told that story briefly to show to what extent the capitalist Powers are prepared to go in order to secure oil rights. The Queensland Government intends to permit foreign capital to enter upon oil exploration on the Roma field. If there is any possible hope of procuring oil there in anything like payable quantities, if it can be proved that the area of supply is extensive, we can rest assured that foreign capitals will rush to get it; but unless the wisest possible precautions are taken to preserve Australian rights, the consequences of being brought into the whirlpool of international conflict over oil resources may be disastrous.

If there is any reasonable prospect of obtaining oil on the Roma field there will be no difficulty in securing Australian capital to exploit it. The Government, therefore, should content itself with legislation to prevent share-broking swindles and to assure that those obtaining permits undertake bona-ilde exploration on penalty of forfeiture.

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"A Dangerous Move". *Daily Standard* (Brisbane, Qld. : 1912 - 1936), Friday 15 November 1929, page 6. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article186799110

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1930-01-17 : La succession d'Abdul Hamid

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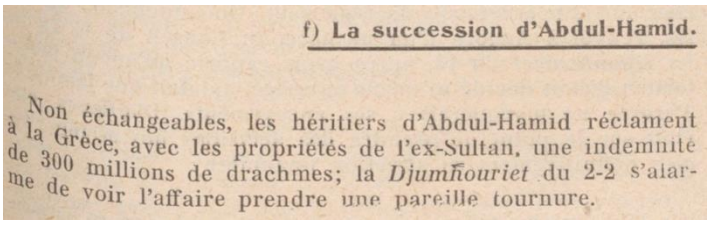
Non échangeables, les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid réclament à la Grèce, avec les propriétés de l'ex-Sultan, une indemnité de de 300 millions de drachmes; la *Djumhouriet* du 2-2 s'alarme de voir l'affaire prendre une pareille tournure.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1930-01-31 : Les héritiers de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid recouvreront-ils son immense fortune ?

FAITS DIVERS

Les héritiers de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid recouvreront-ils son immense fortune ?

Celle-ci est évaluée à 300 millions de livres sterling

Londres, 30.— Le « Daily Mail » conte longuement la lutte que mènent les héritiers de l'ex-sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid II, c'est-à-dire ses enfants et celles de ses femmes qui vivent encore, pour recouvrer la fortune de celui-ci, qui est évaluée à 300 millions de livres sterling.

Le « Daily Mail » croit pouvoir annoncer que la Grèce, pour sa part, faisant droit à leurs réclamations, se préparerait à leur verser dix millions de livres sterling. Le sultan Abdul Hamid, réputé pour sa cruauté, mourut en prison, en 1918. Il avait été déposé et ses biens avaient été confisqués. Ses domaines, qui faisaient de lui l'homme réputé pour le plus riche du monde, comprenaient des territoires en Thessalie, à peu près la moitié de la province de Salonique, une grande partie de la Macédoine, d'immenses propriétés en Syrie, en Palestine, en Mésopotamie et dans l'île de Chypre, les territoires pétrolifères de Mossoul.

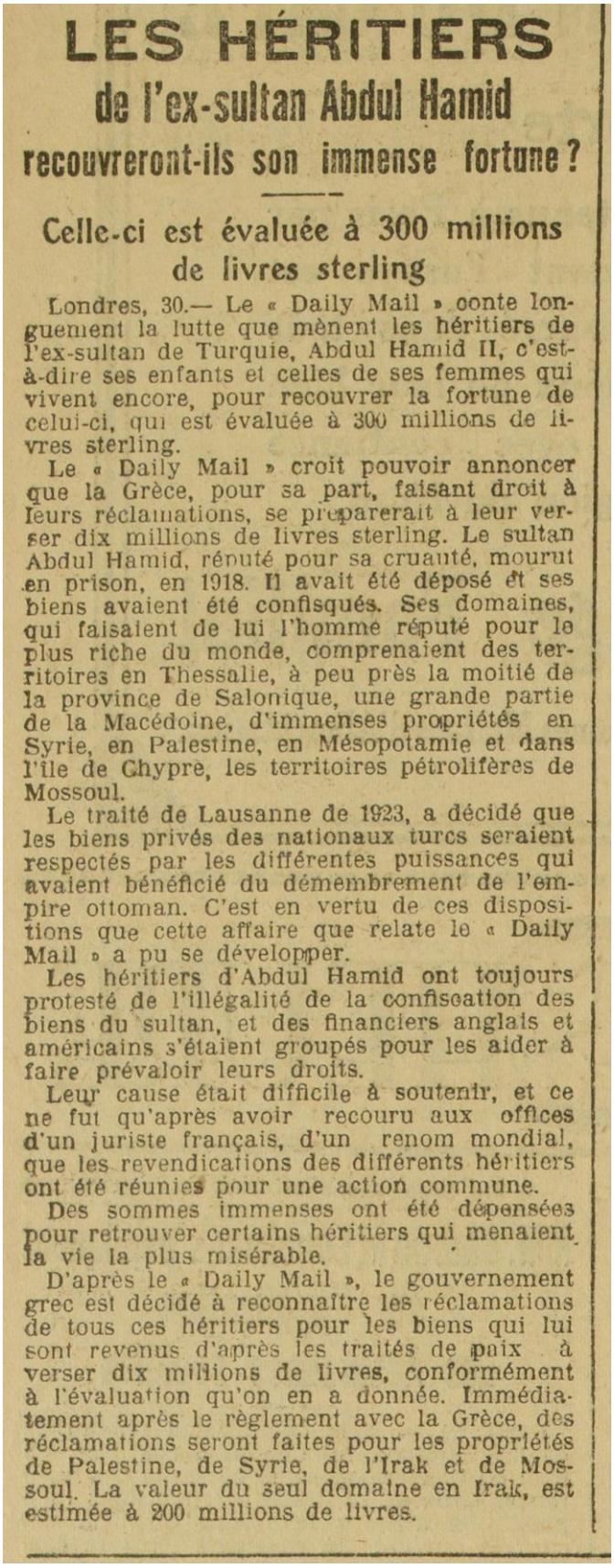
Le traité de Lausanne de 1923, a décidé que les biens privés des nationaux turcs seraient respectés par les différentes puissances qui avaient bénéficié du démembrement de l'empire ottoman. C'est en vertu de ces dispositions que cette affaire que relate le « Daily Mail » a pu se développer.

Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ont toujours protesté biens de l'illégalité de la confiscation des biens du sultan, et des financiers anglais et américains s'étaient groupés pour les aider à faire prévaloir leurs droits.

Leur cause était difficile à soutenir, et ce ne fut qu'après avoir recouru aux offices d'un juriste français, d'un renom mondial, que les revendications des différents héritiers ont été réunies pour une action commune.

Des sommes immenses ont été dépensées pour la retrouver certains héritiers qui menaient a vie la plus misérable.

D'après le « Daily Mail », le gouvernement grec est décidé à reconnaître les réclamations de tous ces héritiers pour les biens qui lui sont revenus d'après les traités de paix à verser dix millions de livres, conformément à l'évaluation qu'on en a donnée. Immédiatement après le règlement avec la Grèce, des réclamations seront faites pour les propriétés de Palestine, de Syrie, de l'Irak et de Mossoul. La valeur du seul domaine en Irak, est estimée à 200 millions de livres.



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Londres, 30.— Le « Daily Mail » conte longuement la lutte que mènent les héritiers de l'ex-sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid II, c'est-à-dire ses enfants et celles de ses femmes qui vivent encore, pour recouvrer la fortune de celui-ci, qui est évaluée à 300 millions de livres sterling.

Le « Daily Mail » croit pouvoir annoncer que la Grèce, pour sa part, faisant droit à leurs réclamations, se préparerait à leur verser dix millions de livres sterling. Le sultan Abdul Hamid, réputé pour sa cruauté, mourut en prison, en 1918. Il avait été déposé et ses biens avaient été confisqués. Ses domaines, qui faisaient de lui l'homme réputé pour le plus riche du monde, comprenaient des territoires en Thessalie, à peu près la moitié de la province de Salonique, une grande partie de la Macédoine, d'immenses propriétés en Syrie, en Palestine, en Mésopotamie et dans l'île de Chypre, les territoires pétrolifères de Mossoul.

Le traité de Lausanne de 1923, a décidé que les biens privés des nationaux turcs seraient respectés par les différentes puissances qui avaient bénéficié du démembrement de l'empire ottoman. C'est en vertu de ces dispositions que cette affaire que relate le « Daily Mail » a pu se développer.

Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ont toujours protesté de l'illégalité de la confiscation des biens du sultan, et des financiers anglais et américains s'étaient groupés pour les aider à faire prévaloir leurs droits.

Leur cause était difficile à soutenir, et ce ne fut qu'après avoir recouru aux offices d'un juriste français, d'un renom mondial, que les revendications des différents héritiers ont été réunies pour une action commune.

Des sommes immenses ont été dépensées pour retrouver certains héritiers qui menaient la vie la plus misérable.

D'après le « Daily Mail », le gouvernement grec est décidé à reconnaître les réclamations de tous ces héritiers pour les biens qui lui sont revenus d'après les traités de paix à verser dix millions de livres, conformément à l'évaluation qu'on en a donnée. Immédiatement après le règlement avec la Grèce, des réclamations seront faites pour les propriétés de Palestine, de Syrie, de l'Irak et de Mossoul. La valeur du seul domaine en Irak, est estimée à 200 millions de livres.

« Les héritiers de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid recouvreront-ils son immense fortune ? », *Le Grand écho du Nord de la France* -- 1930-01-31 -- periodiques, Lille, France, édition 31 janvier 1930 (113e Année, N°31), sect. Faits divers, 31 janvier 1930. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4761590k. Consulté le 27 janvier 2020, p. 3.

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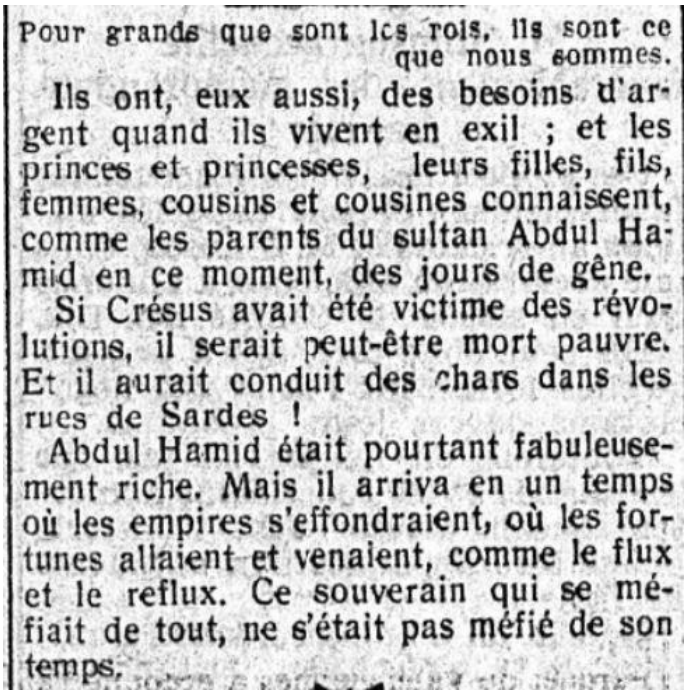
1930-01-31 : Pour grands que sont les rois, ils sont ce que nous sommes

Pour grands que sont les rois, ils sont ce que nous sommes.

Ils ont, eux aussi, des besoins d'argent quand ils vivent en exil ; et les princes et princesses, leurs filles, fils, femmes, cousins et cousines connaissent, comme les parents du sultan Abdul Hamid en ce moment, des jours de gêne.

Si Crésus avait été victime des révolutions, il serait peut-être mort pauvre. Et il aurait conduit des chars dans les rues de Sardes !

Abdul Hamid était pourtant fabuleusement riche. Mais il arriva en un temps où les empires s'effondraient, où les fortunes allaient et venaient, comme le flux et le reflux. Ce souverain qui se méfiait de tout, ne s'était pas méfié de son temps.



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Parti social français, 1930, « Pour grandes que sont les rois, ils sont ce que nous sommes », Le Petit journal, 31 janv. 1930 p. 2.
URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6320464

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1930-03-06: Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid

i) Les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid.

Le 8 avril, le Tribunal mixte franco-turc, par un arrêt longuement motivé, déboutait les héritiers de l'ex-sultan, les biens qu'ils revendiquaient n'ayant pas été l'objet de me- sures de guerre, et les Etats successeurs de l'Empire ottoman ayant acquis gratuitement les biens de la liste civile. L'arrêt déclare, en outre, que les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid, exception faite pour ses veuves, ont perdu la nationalité turque.

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FRANCE MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES et FRANCE MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE, « Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid », Bulletin périodique de la presse turque du 6 mars au 17 avril 1930, n° 76 (mai 1930). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6243904g. Consulté le 29 janvier 2020, p. 4.

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1930-04-05 : Héritiers du sultan Abdul Hamid c. Gouvernement français, et Mehmed Selim effendi c. Gouvernement de Syrie

Dixième Année Publication Mensuelle N° 109-112 Avril-Juillet 1930
(Pages 1 à 192)

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(Avril-Mai-Juin-Juillet 1930)

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1930-04-10 : Le tribunal arbitral franco-turc rejette la prétention des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid

LE TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL FRANCO-TURC REJETTE LA PRÉTENTION DES HÉRITIERS D'ABDUL HAMID

Stamboul, 4 Avril. — Le tribunal arbitral mixte franco-turc s'est réuni aujourd'hui. Acceptant les conclusions de l'agent général du gouvernement français, il a rejeté les prétentions des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid revendiquant la restitution d'immenses territoires agricoles en Syrie et au Liban, faisant partie du patrimoine de l'ex-sultan. Le tribunal a estimé que ces prétentions sont exclues des prévisions du traité de Lausanne, notamment par les articles 60 et 65. Cette décision revêt une grande importance pour les intérêts sous mandat et particulièrement pour la France puissance mandataire.

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1930-04-10 : No Claim. Abdul Hamid's Heirs Millions Involved

NO CLAIM

ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS MILLIONS INVOLVED

("Sun" Special)

CONSTANTINOPLE. Wednesday.

The Franco-British Arbitral Tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid, the second last Sultan of Turkey, for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon valued at several millions sterling.

The decision establishes an Important precedent. Similar claims have been made against the British and Italian Governments relating to most valuable properties In Iraq, Palestine and Tripolitana, and also against Greek lands in Macedonia. The heirs comprise the survivors and descendants of Abdul's thirteen children, who are scattered in many lands, owing to the decree exiling from Turkey all scions of the House of Osman.

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"No Claim. Abdul Hamid's Heirs Millions Involved". *Sun* (Sydney, NSW : 1910 - 1954), Thursday 10 April 1930, page 25. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223704675

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1930-04-10: No Compensation for Late Sultan's Heirs

NO COMPENSATION

FOR LATE SULTAN'S HEIRS

IMPORTANT PRECEDENT

CONSTANTINOPLE, Wednesday,

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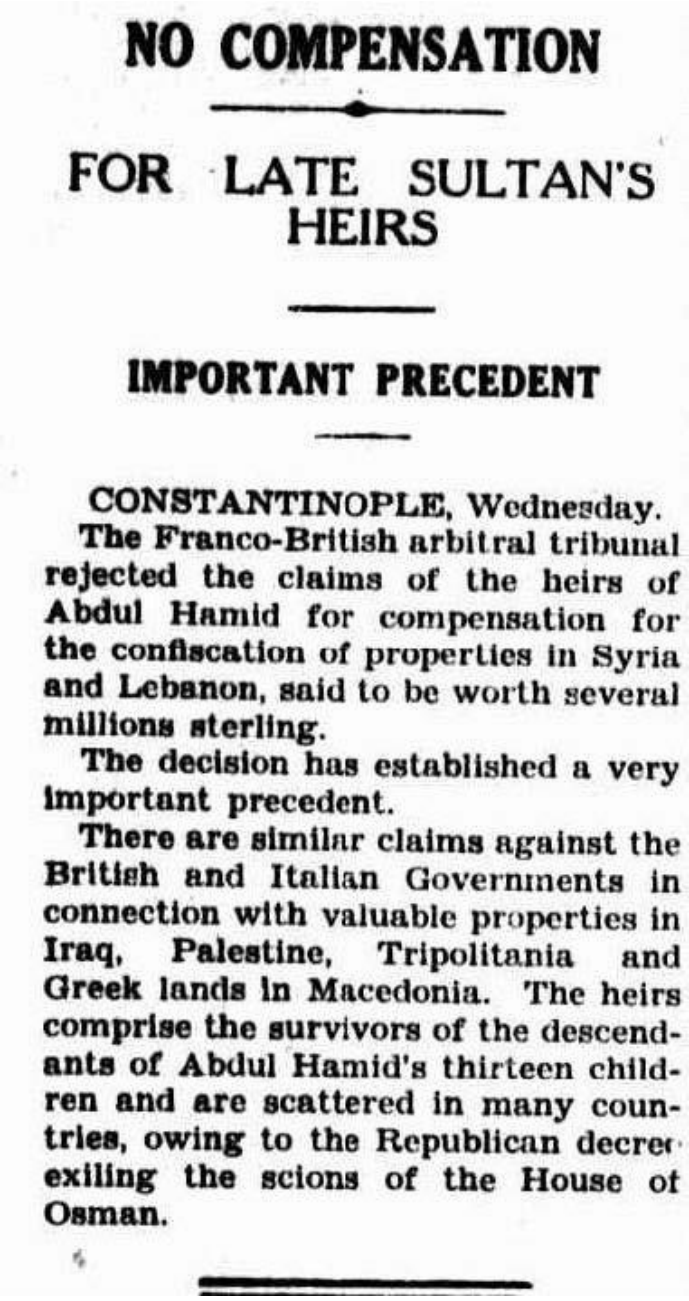
The decision has established a very Important precedent.

There are similar claims against the British and Italian Governments in connection with valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania and Greek lands in Macedonia. The heirs comprise the survivors of the descendants of Abdul Hamid's thirteen children and are scattered in many countries, owing to the Republican decree exiling the scions of the House of Osman.



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"No Compensation for Late Sultan's Heirs. Important Precedent". *Lithgow Mercury* (NSW : 1898 - 1954), Thursday 10 April 1930, page 1. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219582998

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1930-04-11: A Lost Empire. Sultan's Heirs At Law. Big Property Claims Rejected

A LOST EMPIRE.

SULTAN'S HEIRS AT LAW.

Big Property Claims Rejected.

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 9.— A Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid (the last of the Sultans of the old Ottoman Empire, who was deposed by the Republic National Assembly in March, 1924), for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several million pounds.

The decision establishes an important precedent, as similar claims have been made against the British and Italian Governments relating to very valuable properties in Irak, Palestine and Tripolitania, and against Greece regarding lands in Macedonia.

The heirs compose the survivors and descendants of Abdul's thirteen children, who are scattered in many lands, owing to the Turkish Republic decree in 1924 exiling all members of the House of Osman, of which Abdul Hamid was then the head.

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"A Lost Empire. Sultan's Heirs At Law. Big Property Claims Rejected". *West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Friday 11 April 1930, page 19. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31073550

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1930-04-11: Abdul Hamid's Heirs Compensation Claims Rejected

ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS

COMPENSATION CLAIMS REJECTED.

CONSTANTINOPOLE, April 9.

Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid for compensation for the confiscation of his properties in Syria and Lebanon valued at several millions sterling. The decision establishes an important precedent. There are similar claims against the English and Italian Governments relating to most valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania, and Greece and lands in Macedonia. The heirs comprise the survivors of descendants of the Abdul Hamid's 13 children, who are scattered over many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all scions of the house of Osman.

[Sultan Abdul Hamid (1876-1908) was driven from the Turkish. throne during the process of .constitutional reforms.]

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"Abdul Hamid's Heirs Compensation Claims Rejected". *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954), Friday 11 April 1930, page 6. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article51654485

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1930-04-11: Claims Rejected. Heirs of Former Sultan Land Worth Millions

CLAIMS REJECTED

Heirs of Former Sultan

LAND WORTH MILLIONS

(SPECIAL TO "THE NEWS")

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 9.

Claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid (former Sultan of Turkey) for compensation for the confiscation of properties in. Syria and Lebanon valued at several millions of pounds have, been rejected by a Franco. British tribunal.

The decision establishes an important precedent, as similar claims have been made against the British and Italian Governments relating to valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripoli, and Greece. The heirs comprise survivors and descendants of 13 children of the former Sultan, who are scattered in many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all scions of the House of Osman.

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1930-04-11: La succession d'Abdul Hamid

La succession d'Abdul Hamid

Les héritiers et l'ancien sultan sont déboutés par le tribunal arbitral franco-turc

Le tribunal arbitral mixte franco-turc s'est réuni, mercredi, à Stamboul, pour rendre son jugement au sujet des réclamations des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid qui avaient revendiqué la restitution d'immenses territoires agricoles en Syrie et au Liban, faisant partie du patrimoine de l'ex-sultan. Le tribunal, adoptant les conclusions de l'agent général du gouvernement français, a rejeté ces prétentions estimant qu'elles sont exclues des prévisions du traité de Lausanne.

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« La succession d'Abdul Hamid », *La Croix*, Paris, France, édition 1930/04/11 (Numéro 14452), sect. Faits divers, 11 avril 1930. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica, ark:/12148/bpt6k412719h. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k412719h. p. 5.

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1930-04-11: Sultan's Heirs Lose Claim

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(Register World Cables)

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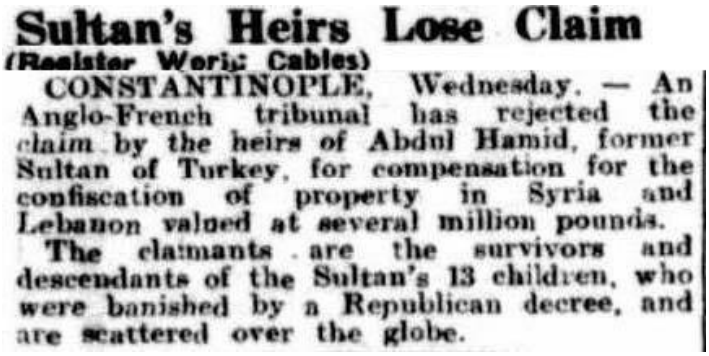
The claimants are the survivors and descendants of the Sultan's 13 children, who were banished by a Republican decree, and are Scattered over the globe.



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"Sultan's Heirs Lose Claim". *Register News-Pictorial* (Adelaide, SA : 1929 - 1931), Friday 11 April 1930, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article53500086

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1930-04-11: Sultan's Heirs Compensation Claim Fails

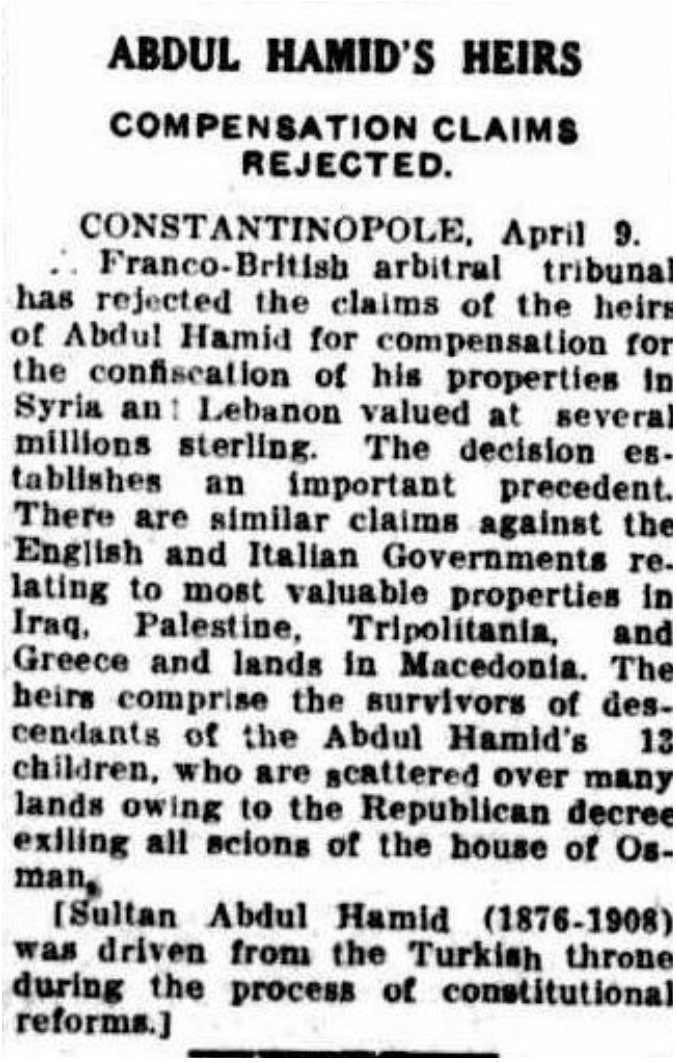
ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS

COMPENSATION CLAIMS REJECTED.

CONSTANTINOPOLE, April 9.

Franco-British arbitral tribunal hlus rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Ifamid for compensation for the confiscation of his properties In Syria ant Lebanon valued at several millions sterling. ' The decision establishes an important precedent. There are similar claims against the - Engllsh' and Italian Governments relating to most valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitanla, and ,Greece and lands in Macedonia. The heirs comprise the survivors of descendants of the Abdul Hamid's 13 children, who are scattered over many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all scions of the house of Osman.

[Sultan Abdul Hamid (1876-1908) was driven from the Turkish. throne during the process of .constitutional reforms.]



ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS

COMPENSATION CLAIMS REJECTED.

CONSTANTINOPOLE, April 9.

Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid for compensation for the confiscation of his properties in Syria an! Lebanon valued at several millions sterling. The decision establishes an important precedent. There are similar claims against the English and Italian Governments relating to most valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania, and Greece and lands in Macedonia. The heirs comprise the survivors of descendants of the Abdul Hamid's 13 children, who are scattered over many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all scions of the house of Osman.

[Sultan Abdul Hamid (1876-1908) was driven from the Turkish throne during the process of constitutional reforms.]

"Abdul Hamid's Heirs Compensation Claims Rejected". *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954), Friday 11 April 1930, page 6. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article51654485

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-11: Sultan's Heirs Compensation Claim Fails

SULTAN'S HEIRS
Compensation Claim Fails

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 9.

The Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid for compensation in respect to the compensation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions of pounds. The decision establishes an important precedent, and there are similar claims against the British and Italian Governments relating to very valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine. Tripolitania, and against Greece over lands in Macedonia.

The heirs who made the claim comprise survivors and descendants of Abdul's 13 children, now scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling from Turkey all scions of the House of Osman. Abdul Hamid was Sultan of Turkey from 1876 to 1908, when he abdicated.

SULTAN'S HEIRS

Compensation Claim Fails

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"Sultan's Heirs Compensation Claim Fails". *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* (NSW : 1876 - 1954) , Friday 11 April 1930, page 9. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article133391906

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-11: A Lost Empire. Sultan's Heirs At Law. Big Property Claims Rejected

A LOST EMPIRE.

SULTAN'S HEIRS AT LAW.

Big Property Claims Rejected.

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 9.— A Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid (the last of tho Sultans of the old Ottoman Empire, who was deposed by the Republic National Assembly in March, 1924), for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several million pounds.

The decision establishes an important precedent, as similar claims have been made against the British and Italian Governments relating to very valuable properties in Irak, Palestine and Tripolitania, and against Greece regarding lands in Macedonia.

The heirs compose the survivors and descendants of Abdul's thirteen children, who are scattered in many lands, owing to the Turkish Republic decree in 1924 exiling all members of the House of Osman, of which Abdul Hamid was then the head.

A LOST EMPIRE.
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"A Lost Empire. Sultan's Heirs At Law. Big Property Claims Rejected". *West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Friday 11 April 1930, page 19. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31073550

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-11: Turkish Sultan. Claims Of Heirs Rejected. Franco-British Tribunal

TURKISH SULTAN

CLAIMS OF HEIRS REJECTED

FRANCO-BRITISH TRIBUNAL

CONSTANTINOPLE, Wednesday,

The Franco-British arbitral tribunal rejected the claims of the heirs of, Sultan Abdul Hamid against the confiscation of property in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions of pounds.

The decision establishes an important precedent, as there are several claims against the British and Italian Governments relating to various properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania, and Greece, and lands is Macedonia.

The heirs comprise the survivors of the descendants of Sultan Abdul's 13 child roll, who are scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling all sections of the house of Osman.

TURKISH SULTAN

CLAIMS OF HEIRS REJECTED

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The heirs comprise the survivors of the descendants of Sultan Abdul's 13 children, who are scattered in many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all sections of the house of Osman.

"Turkish Sultan. Claims Of Heirs Rejected. Franco-British Tribunal". "Turkish Sultan. Claims of Heirs Rejected Franco-British Tribunal". *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga, NSW : 1911 - 1954), Friday 11 April 1930, page 1. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article142756082

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-11: War Claims By Abdul Hamid's Heirs

WAR CLAIMS.

BY ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS.

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 8.

The Franco-British Arbitral Tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of the [?]-Sultan, Abdul Hamid for compensation for the confiscation of their properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions sterling.

The decision establishes an important precedent, as there are several claims against the Anglo-Egyptian Governments relating to most valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania, and Greece, and lands is Macedonia.

The heirs comprise the survivors and descendants of Abdul's 13 children, who are scattered in many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all scions of the house of Osman.

WAR CLAIMS
BY ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 9.

The Franco-British Arbitral Tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of the ex-Sultan, Abdul Hamid, for compensation for the confiscation of their properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions sterling.

This decision establishes an important precedent, as there are similar claims against the Anglo-Egyptian Governments relating to most valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania, and Greece, and lands in Macedonia.

The heirs comprise the survivors and descendants of Abdul's thirteen children, who are now scattered in many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling all scions of the House of Osman.

"War Claims By Abdul Hamid's Heirs". *Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Friday 11 April 1930, page 22. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article29021839

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-12: Turkey's Former Sultan. Property To Be Confiscated. Tribunal's Important Decision

TURKEY'S FORMER SULTAN

PROPERTY TO BE CONFISCATED

TRIBUNAL'S IMPORTANT DECISION

Constantinople, April 9

The Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid for compensation in connection with the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions sterling.

The decision establishes an important precedent for similar claims against the Anglo-Italian Governments relating to most valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripolitania and Greece and lands in Macedonia.

The heirs comprise survivors and descendants of Abdul's 13 children who are scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling all scions of the House of Osman.

TURKEY'S FORMER SULTAN

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TRIBUNAL'S IMPORTANT DECISION

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The heirs comprise survivors and descendants of Abdul's 13 children who are scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling all scions of the House of Osman.

"Turkey's Former Sultan. Property To Be Confiscated. Tribunal's Important Decision ». *Geraldton Guardian and Express* (WA : 1929 - 1947). 12 avril 1930. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article67245382

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-13: Claims Rejected Sultan's Millions. Anglo-French Decision

CLAIMS REJECTED

SULTAN'S MILLIONS

ANGLO-FRENCH DECISION

(AUSTRALIAN CABLE SERVICE.)

CONSTANTINOPLE, Saturday. — The Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid (former Sultan) for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon valued at several millions of pounds.

The decision establishes an important precedent, for there are similar claims against1 the British and Italian Governments relating to valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripoli, and Greece.

The heirs comprise survivors of the House of Osman, who are scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling all members of the family.

CLAIMS REJECTED

SULTAN'S MILLIONS

ANGLO-FRENCH DECISION

(AUSTRALIAN CABLE SERVICE.)

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The decision establishes an important precedent, for there are similar claims against the British and Italian Governments relating to valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripoli, and Greece.

The heirs comprise survivors of the House of Osman, who are scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling all members of the family.

"Claims Rejected Sultan's Millions. Anglo-French Decision". *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane, Qld. : 1926 - 1954), Sunday 13 April 1930, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article97668301

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-13 : Le fabuleux héritage d'Abdul Hamid

Le fabuleux héritage d'Abdul Hamid

Neuf des veuves de l'ex-sultan rentreront dans leurs droits

Nous avons transposé en français les lignes suivantes d'une grande revue Américaine à laquelle nous laissons l'entière responsabilité de ses assertions et des chiffres qu'elle cite sur la fabuleuse fortune d'Abdul Hamid.

QUAND l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid fut déposé, ses nombreuses femmes furent comme de juste renvoyées du palais et bien embarrassées sur la façon dont elles se tireraient pour vivre à l'avenir. Les familles des unes et des autres avaient été dispersées ou tuées durant la guerre et il leur était devenu impossible de retourner chez elles.

Plusieurs sultanes furent réduites à la mendicité ; certaines d'entre elles s'exhibèrent dans les music-halls avec l'eunuque chargé de veiller à leur garde au palais et quelques-unes se contentèrent d'ouvrir de petites boutiques pour touristes.

Leurs enfants ne furent pas plus heureux. Ainsi le prince Abdel Kader qui était l'un des fils favoris de l'ex-sultan fit partie durant assez longtemps d'un orchestre à Vienne, mais, comme nous l'avons appris dernièrement à nos lecteurs, il fut prié de quitter l'Autriche à cause de ses nombreuses dettes.

A l'heure qu'il est les choses ont changé. Neuf des femmes de l'ex-Sultan et treize de ses fils sont appelés à se partager 10.000.000 de livres de la colossale fortune de leur mari et père qu'on estime à près de 300.000.000 de livres.

Ce fut un travail ardu de découvrir les femmes de l'ex-sultan et d'examiner leurs droits à l'héritage. A un moment donné Abdul-Hamid possédait cent-quatre-vingt-dix femmes officielles, mais toutes ne peuvent prétendre à la succession car la loi turque prévoit que seules peuvent hériter les épouses qui se seraient mariées le dix septième jour du mois de Ramadan et auraient mis au monde un fils. Neuf des femmes officielles d'Abdul-Hamid ont rempli ces conditions. Celles-ci ne se doutant pas de leurs droits s'étaient dispersées aux quatre coins du monde et, quand un avocat vint avertir l'une d'elles de la somme fabuleuse à laquelle elle pouvait prétendre, elle crut avoir affaire à un émissaire de quelque tyran, venu les exécuter.

Le premier acompte à valoir sur les 10 millions de livres qui seront versées aux femmes d'Abdul-Hamid sera payé par le gouvernement grec sur une propriété que possédait l'ex-sultan dans le territoire hellène. De plus l'Aegan Financial Trust of London espère récupérer une somme de 20 millions de livres pour les veuves d'Abdul-Hamid, du nouveau royaume d'Irak, formé depuis la guerre. Cette société prétend en effet que la confiscation des biens de l'ex-sultan dans ce pays fut illégale. Ce dernier était propriétaire de terrains en Thessalie, en Grèce, à Salonique, en Macédoine et était gros actionnaire de divers trusts en Syrie, Irak, Palestine et Chypre.

L'ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid qui mourut en prison en 1918 était considéré comme l'homme le plus riche du monde. Quand il fut déposé, il possédait en caisse 8 millions de livres. Parmi les héritiers se trouvent la sultane Bedrifelek, qui fut à un moment donné la favorite d'abdul Hamid, et ses enfants le prince Sélim, le prince Ahmed et la princesse Zehil.

*

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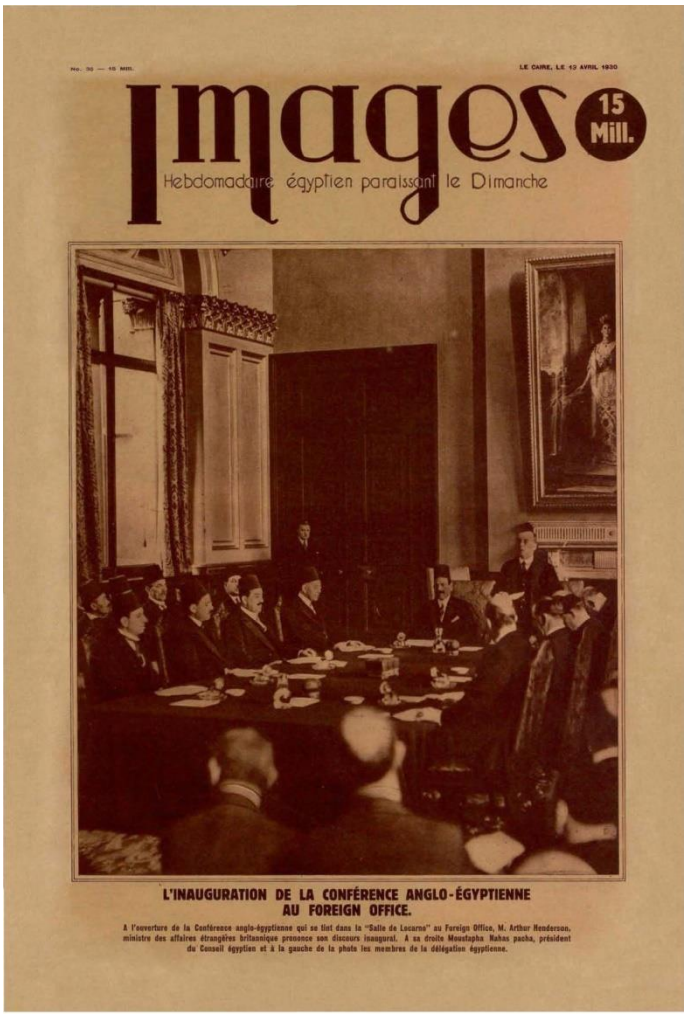

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

service. Ceux-ci serraient de près tout homme qui leur paraissait suspect et ne manquaient pas, quand l'occasion se présentait, de le faire emprisonner et parfois exécuter.

Le sultan qui, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, possédait un nombre de femmes impressionnant connaissait mille moyens d'enrichir son harem par des spécimens féminins du meilleur choix. Il avait une prédilection spéciale pour les circassiennes dont la beauté était et est encore légendaire. Sa collection de joyaux, composée de diamants, de rubis, d'émeraudes et autres pierres précieuses était évaluée à 16 millions de livres.

Quand il fut déposé, cet homme qui fut durant tout son règne un véritable tyran eut ce mot inattendu aux membres du nouveau gouvernement: « J'espère, leur dit-il, que vous n'allez pas me tuer après tout le bien que j'ai fait ».

On lui répondit qu'il ne serait pas tué mais traité, au contraire, avec égards.

Il fut exilé dans une villa des environs de Salonique avec onze de ses femmes. La plupart des neuf qui ont droit à l'héritage furent laissées à Constantinople durant l'exil du Sultan.

*

On comprend bien à l'heure qu'il est combien celles-ci sont courues par les maris à la recherche d'une grosse dot; et celle dont chacune sera pourvue a de quoi tenter plus d'un époux...

Audax

Le fabuleux héritage d'Abdul Hamid

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Le sultan Abdul-Hamid

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Parmi les héritiers se trouvent la sultane Bedrilelek, qui fut à un moment donné la favorite d'Abdul Hamid, et ses enfants le prince Sélim, le prince Ahmed et la princesse Zehil.

Décidé à lutter contre toutes tentatives d'affranchissement de la part de ses sujets, il avait une armée de 20.000 espions à son service. Ceux ci serraient de près tout homme qui leur paraissait suspect et ne masquaient pas, quand l'occasion se présentait, de le faire emprisonner et parfois exécuter.

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Audax

TABLEAUX DU XVIIIe. SIÈCLE
ELISABETH WILDENSTEIN
23 bis, Rue de Berri
PARIS

Images
La revue qu'il faut lire et faire lire, qui a acquis tous les suffrages et dont le tirage, officiellement contrôlé, a battu celui de tous les journaux et périodiques français d'Egypte.

« Le fabuleux héritage d'Abdul Hamid. Neuf veuves de l'ex-sultan rentreront dans leurs droits ». *Images - Hebdomadaire égyptien paraissant le Dimanche*, Le Caire, 13 avril 1930, numéro 30, page 21.
URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9106036j

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1930-04-14: Confiscated Turkish Properties. Ex-Sultan's Claims Rejected

Confiscated Turkish Properties.

Ex-Sultan's Claims Rejected

(Australian Cable Service)

CONSTANTINOPLE: Sunday.

The Franco-British Arbitrators Tribunal has rejected the rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul-Hamid (former Sultan) for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions of pounds.

The decision establishes an important precedent for there are similar claims against the British and Italian Governments relating to valuable properties in Iraq, Palestine, Tripoli and Greece. The heirs comprise survivors of the house of Osman, who are scattered in many lands owing to the republican decree exiling all members of the family.

Confiscated Turkish Properties.

EX-SULTAN'S CLAIMS REJECTED.

(Australian Cable Service.)
CONSTANTINOPLE, Sunday.
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« Confiscated Turkish Properties. Ex-Sultan's Claims Rejected ». *Evening News* (Rockhampton, Qld. : 1924 - 1941). 14 April 1930. National Library of Australia. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article202493476

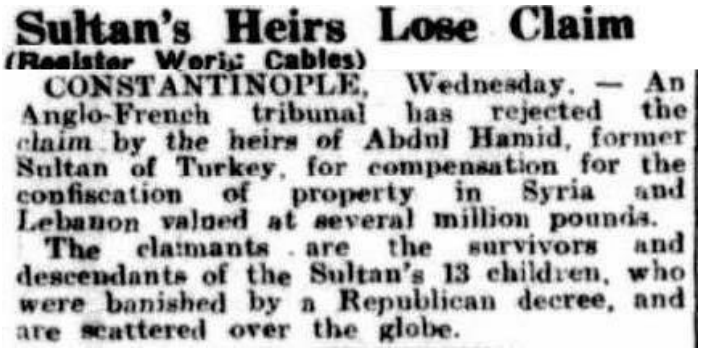
JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-17: Sultan's Heirs Lose Claim

Sultan's Heirs Lose Claim

CONSTANTINOPLE.. April 9. — An Anglo-French tribunal has rejected the claim by the heirs of Abdul Hamid, former Sultan of Turkey, for compensation for the confiscation of property - in Syria and Lebanon valued at several million pounds.

The claimants are the survivors and descendants of the Sultan's 13 children, who were banished by a Republican decree, and are scattered over the globe.



Sultan's Heirs Lose Claim

(Register World Cables)

CONSTANTINOPLE, Wednesday. — An Anglo-French tribunal has rejected the claim by the heirs of Abdul Hamid, former Sultan of Turkey, for compensation for the confiscation of property in Syria and Lebanon valued at several million pounds.

The claimants are the survivors and descendants of the Sultan's 13 children, who were banished by a Republican decree, and are scattered over the globe.

"Sultan's Heirs Lose Claim". *Observer* (Adelaide, SA : 1905 - 1931), Thursday 17 April 1930, page 46. National Library of Australia.
URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article168927638

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-19: Foreign

FOREIGN

A Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid, the late Sultan of Turkey, for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions of pounds. Similar claims have been made against the Italian and British Governments relating to most valuable properties in Irak, Palestine, Tripolitania and Greece, and lands in Macedonia.

FOREIGN

A Franco-British arbitral tribunal has rejected the claims of the heirs of Abdul Hamid, the late Sultan of Turkey, for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon, valued at several millions of pounds. Similar claims have been made against the Italian and British Governments relating to most valuable properties in Irak, Palestine, Tripolitania and Greece, and lands in Macedonia.

"Foreign". *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1869 - 1954), Saturday 19 April 1930, page 8. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223997806

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-04-24: Lost Nationality. Claim To Estates Disallowed

LOST NATIONALITY

CLAIM TO ESTATES DISALLOWED

CONSTANTINOPLE, Tuesday.

The Italian-Turkish tribunal disallowed the claim of Sultan Abdul Hamid's heirs to the estates in Tripoli and Benghazi to the value of £2,500,000 on the ground that they had lost their Turkish nationality.

LOST NATIONALITY

CLAIM TO ESTATES DISALLOWED

CONSTANTINOPLE, Tuesday.

The Italian-Turkish tribunal disallowed the claim of Sultan Abdul Hamid's heirs to the estates in Tripoli and Benghazi to the value of £2,500,000 on the ground that they had lost their Turkish nationality.

"Lost Nationality. Claim To Estates Disallowed". *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga, NSW : 1911 - 1954), Thursday 24 April 1930, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article142758196

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1930-04-22: Sultan's Heirs. Big Claims Disallowed

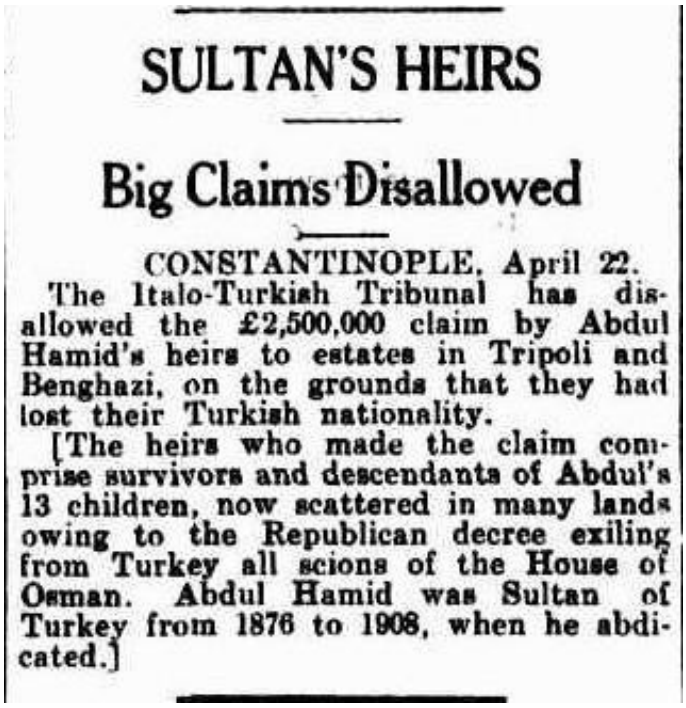
SULTAN'S HEIRS

Big Claims Disallowed

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 22.

The Italo-Turkish Tribunal has disallowed the £2,500,000 claim by Abdul Hamid's heirs to estates in Tripoli and Benghazi, on the grounds that they had lost their Turkish nationality.

[The heirs who made the claim comprise survivors and descendants of Abdul's 13 children, now scattered in many lands owing to the Republican decree exiling from Turkey all scions of the House oh Osman. Abdul Hamid was Sultan of Turkey from 1870 to 1908, when he abdicated.]



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"Sultan's Heirs. Big Claims Disallowed". *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* (NSW : 1876 - 1954) , Thursday 24 April 1930, page 7. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article133397903

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1930-04-26: A Sultan's Estate. Heir's Claim Rejected

A SULTAN'S ESTATE

HEIR'S CLAIM REJECTED.

Constantinople. April 22.

An Italian Turkish tribunal disallowed the claim of the heirs of Abdul Hamid (the last of the Sultans of the old Ottoman Empire who was deposed in 1924) to estates in Tripoli and Benghazi valued at £2,500,000. The ground for the Court's action was that the heirs have lost their Turkish nationality. They are scattered in many lands, having been exiled by the Turkish Republic by decree in 1924.

Already their claims for compensation for the confiscation of properties in Syria and Lebanon have been rejected by a Franco-Turkish tribunal. Further claims against Britain and Greece are pending.

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"A Sultan's Estate. Heir's Claim Rejected". *Kalgoorlie Miner* (WA : 1895 - 1950), Saturday 26 April 1930, page 5. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article94340011

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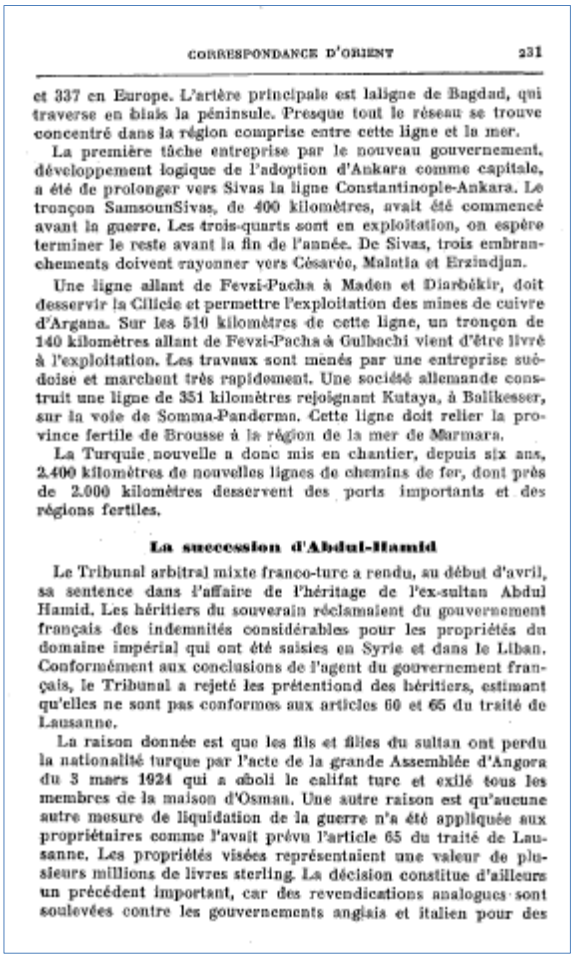
1930-05-01: La succession d'Abdul-Hamid

La succession d'Abdul-Hamid

Le Tribunal arbitral mixte franco-turc a rendu, au début d'avril, sa sentence dans l'affaire de l'héritage de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid. Les héritiers du souverain réclamaient du gouvernement français des indemnités considérables pour les propriétés du domaine impérial qui ont été saisies en Syrie et dans le Liban. Conformément aux conclusions de l'agent du gouvernement français, le Tribunal a rejeté les prétentions des héritiers, estimant qu'elles ne sont pas conformas aux articles 60 et 66 du traité de Lausanne.

La raison donnée est que les fils et filles du sultan ont perdu la nationalité turque par l'acte de la grande Assemblée d'Angora du 3 mars 1024 qui a aboli le califat turc et exilé tous les membres de la maison d'Osman. Une autre raison est qu'aucune autre mesure de liquidation de la guerre n'a été appliquée aux propriétaires comme l'avait prévu l'article 65 du traité de Lausanne. Les propriétés visées représentaient une valeur de plusieurs millions de livres sterling. La décision constitue d'ailleurs un précédent important, car des revendications analogues sont soulevées contre les gouvernements anglais et italien pour des propriétés situées en Irak, en Palestine. et en Tripolitaine, et contre le gouvernement grec pour des propriétés situées en Macédoine. Abdul-Hamid avait la passion de la terre autant que celle de l'or et des bijoux, il choisissait les terres les plus riches, celles qui renfermaient des mines et des terrains pétrolifères, et en faisait l'acquisition. L'opération se faisait d'ailleurs dans les formules les plus régulières et les titres de propriété étaient enregistrés dans toutes les formes légales. Le sultan avait compté seulement sans les revers de la fortune.



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et 337 en Europe. L'artère principale est laligne de Bagdad, qui traverse en biais la péninsule. Presque tout le réseau se trouve concentré dans la région comprise entre cette ligne et la mer.

La première tâche entreprise par le nouveau gouvernement, développement logique de l'adoption d'Ankara comme capitale, a été de prolonger vers Sivas la ligne Constantinople-Ankara. Le tronçon SamsounSivas, de 400 kilomètres, avait été commencé avant la guerre. Les trois-quarts sont en exploitation, on espère terminer le reste avant la fin de l'année. De Sivas, trois embranchements doivent rayonner vers Césarée, Malatia et Erzindjan.

Une ligne allant de Fevzi-Pacha à Maden et Diarbékir, doit desservir la Cilicie et permettre l'exploitation des mines de cuivre d'Argana. Sur les 510 kilomètres de cette ligne, un tronçon de 140 kilomètres allant de Fevzi-Pacha à Gulbachi vient d'être livré à l'exploitation. Les travaux sont menés par une entreprise suédoise et marchent très rapidement. Une société allemande construit une ligne de 351 kilomètres rejoignant Kutaya, à Balikesser, sur la voie de Somma-Panderma. Cette ligne doit relier la province fertile de Brousse à la région de la mer de Marmara.

La Turquie nouvelle a donc mis en chantier, depuis six ans, 2.400 kilomètres de nouvelles lignes de chemins de fer, dont près de 2.000 kilomètres desservent des ports importants et des régions fertiles.

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« La succession d'Abdul-Hamid », *Correspondance d'Orient : revue économique, politique & littéraire* / directeurs : Chekri-Ganem, Dr Georges Samné, 1930, mai 1930, n° 389, Mai 1930, 22e Année, page 231.

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1930-11-06: L'héritage d'Abdul-Hamid.

L'héritage d'Abdul-Hamid.	
Le procès intenté par les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid au gouvernement anglais vient de revenir devant le Tribunal arbitral; de l'avis de la *Djumhouriet* du 3-12, la situation serait complètement changée par suite d'une décision du gouvernement turc, décision annoncée dans le communiqué officiel ci-après : « Le Conseil des ministres a décidé de remettre à son agent auprès du Tribunal arbitral mixte turco-anglais, dans le but d'être remise au dit Tribunal, une liste des biens, meubles et immeubles, se trouvant en territoire étranger, en dehors de la Grèce, formant la succession de feu Abdul-Hamid, considérés comme bien personnels par les Hautes Parties contractantes, ainsi qu'il en avait été décidé lors de la discussion de l'article 60 du traité de Lausanne. » En même temps, les héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid plaident contre le gouvernement italien : dans l'audience du Tribunal arbitral turco-italien du 3 décembre, leur avocat a soutenu que, déchus du droit de citoyens turcs, ils conservent cependant la sujétion turque, et leurs revendications de la sorte, deviennent valables. Tout dépend de l'interprétation de ce même article 60 (*ibidem*, 4-12). Nous trouvons dans le numéro du 14 une lettre ouverte de M. Sami Günzberg, fondé de pouvoirs des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid, au président du Tribunal turco-italien, répondant aux objections faites contre la validité des droits des héritiers, et une note demandant au Tribunal turco-anglais de ne pas se prononcer sans avoir pris connaissance des documents que le gouvernement turc lui envoie : « Nous attirons l'attention du Tribunal mixte à ce sujet et le prions de ne pas noircir la « page de justice » qu'il a mission de remplir par une hâte qui serait considérée comme tout à fait partiale. » L'agent turc auprès du Tribunal devra y veiller. Le 16, les deux Tribunaux mixtes se déclaraient incompétents. Cette décision était prévue, et les journaux annonçaient le lendemain que le gouvernement interviendrait par voie diplomatique en faveur des héritiers.	

FRANCE MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES et FRANCE MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE, « L'héritage d'Abdul Hamid », Bulletin périodique de la presse turque du 6 novembre au 17 décembre 1930, n° 81 (janvier 1931). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6243909j. Consulté le 29 janvier 2020, p. 10.

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1930-11-06: A Record Case. Abdul Hamid's Heirs at Work

A RECORD CASE.

Abdul Hamid's Heirs at Work.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

CAIRO, Nov. 25.

The Turco-British Mixed Court in Constantinople has before it what is probably one of the biggest inheritance cases on record. It is brought against the British Government by the relatives of the former reigning house of Othman, who have constituted themselves into an association known as the "heirs of Abdul Hamid." These claimants are seeking to recover the vast estates all over the Turkish Empire which were the personal property of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. They have behind them various syndicates floated in Europe for the express purpose of assisting them to obtain their rights.

The present action is for the properties confiscated in Palestine and Iraq, which include the Mosul oilfields. The heirs of Abdul Hamid claim that these oilfields were never part of the Government Domain, but were purchased by Sultan Abdul Hamid himself and carefully registered as his personal property. He was a far-seeing man, and, realizing what important place oil would fill in the future, he took the precaution of earmarking that rich oil-bearing area as his own. According to the claimants the present Turkish Government gave a decision which supports the contention that the oilfields were the Sultan's private possession.

Considerable interest is taken in this case because of the big financial interests involved. It is the last of a series of similar cases which have been heard during the past ten years by the French, Greek, and Italian Mixed Courts, established like the British under the Lausanne Treaty. In each instance the court, dealing with claims in respect of Abdul Hamid's estates situated in what is at present French, Greek, or Italian territory, decided against the heirs.

There are in all twenty-seven claimants, mostly living in poverty. The male heirs are all in exile; the female heiresses are still in Turkey, Kemal Pasha having decided that the women of the Imperial houses should be excepted from the decree of exile and be allowed to live in Turkey as Turkish subjects.

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SEVEN WIDOWS CLAIM.

Amongst the female claimants are seven widows of Sultans. Two of them are the youngest widows of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and five are those of Sultan Wahid Eddin, including the beautiful gardener's daughter who was his last wife. All are living in obscurity and it is believed in penury, many seeking out a mean and bare existence in tumbled wooden hovels in the villages along the Bosphorus. Even the freed eunuchs of the palace, who can be seen walking any day about the streets dressed in the smartest European clothes, are

can be seen walking any day about the streets dressed in the smartest European clothes, are better off than their erstwhile mistresses. Guarded by a few aged "Calfas" or Imperial nurses, they are selling off piece by piece the few treasures or relics of Imperial finery which they saved from the wreck of the Imperial house. The property in Turkey of the male heirs has been sold by leave of the Angora Government. But none of the proceeds has reached the women; it has all gone abroad to the male descendants.

The financial backers of the present case believe that they will in the end get the support of Angora in this matter. They contend that, while the Turkish Government might not be prepared to interest itself on behalf of the exiled male members of the Imperial house, it might well be induced to help its own subjects domiciled in Turkey, and it is thought that, if the British Tribunal at Constantinople follows the other International Tribunals and decides against the claimants to the Mossul oilfields, Angora will support an application to refer the question to the Hague International Court.

TURKISH WOMEN.

Apropos of Turkish women Angora is doing its utmost to abolish everything which is contrary to hygiene, progress, and modern ideas. A new law has just been enacted prohibiting the erection of the "Mushrabias," with which Oriental houses have been provided since time immemorial to prevent the womenfolk from being seen. Those that exist will not be removed, but just as no more wooden houses are to be built, so no more "grilles" are to be attached to windows. Angora considers that sun and air are more valuable to the health of the race than is privacy to its morals.

Moreover the modern fad of birth control is receiving no countenance from the Turkish Ministry of Health. This has just announced that mothers of over six children are to receive a money grant, and that every province must keep a list of them and must budget a credit for them. Physical culture, too, is being given great attention, and the girls' schools are adopting the latest European physical exercises. One of the Turkish newspapers is organising the third Turkish women's beauty competition, and it calls for no shyness to deter aspirants from coming forward from all ranks of society. It says that the object of these competitions is to display the perfection of Turkish womanhood to the world, and it insists that the face is not the only thing that will be the best. The body and its "eurhythmic" features will also be taken into account, perhaps to a greater degree than the face, because the modern standard of feminine beauty includes also the body and its lines as in the days of the Greeks.

For this reason the last Turkish beauty queen underwent a long "slimming process" before she went to South America to compete for the world beauty prize. She was taken in hand by two Turkish women eurhythmists, who had studied physical culture in Berlin, and she was gradually brought to harmony and grace of line. These new health ideas are bringing about a change in the Turkish view of feminine beauty. The full-fleshed, silent, docile, lazy product of the idle life of the harem is no longer wanted. On the other hand, the extreme flatness of the most modern European type of feminine beauty is equally deprecated. The Turkish beauty type is now eminently an outdoor type made harmonious not by sport, but by scientific physical culture.

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Macquarie University

Colonial Cases

Heirs of Abdul Hamid, 1930

[succession]

Heirs of Abdul Hamid

Mixed Court, Constantinople

25 November 1930

The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 December 1930

A RECORD CASE.

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Considerable interest is taken in this case because of the big financial interests involved. It is the last of a series of similar cases which have been heard during the past ten years by the French, Greek, and Italian Mixed Courts, established like the British under the Lausanne Treaty. In each instance the court, dealing with claims in respect of Abdul Hanid's estates situated in what is at present French, Greek, or Italian territory, decided against the heirs.

There are in all twenty-seven claimants, mostly living in poverty. The male heirs are all in exile; the female heiresses are still in Turkey, Kemal Pasha having decided that the women of the Imperial houses should be excepted from the decree of exile and be allowed to live in Turkey as Turkish subjects.

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Published by Centre for Comparative Law, History and Governance at Macquarie Law School

"A Record Case. Abdul Hamid's Heirs at Work". *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 30 December 1930, page 6. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16742514.

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1930-11-25 : Le procès des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid contre le gouvernement anglais

Le procès des héritiers
d'Abdul Hamid
contre le gouvernement anglais

Le jugement sera rendu le 14 décembre

Londres, 24 novembre (de notre corr. part., par téléphone). — Le procès intenté par sept fils, une fille et- quatre veuves de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid au gouvernement britannique, en restitution de 16 millions de livres, représentant-le montant de la succession de l'ex-sultan en Irak, Mossoul, Palestine et autres anciens territoires turcs, est, venu hier, devant le tribunal de Constantinople.

Les avocats du gouvernement britannique, ont plaidé l'incompétence du tribunal, se basant d'abord sur les articles 60 et 65 du traité de Lausanne et ensuite sur le fait que le gouvernement de la République turque a déchu les demandeurs de leur qualité de citoyens ottomans.

Le jugement du tribunal sera prononcé le 14 décembre. — **T. B.**

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« Le procès des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid contre le gouvernement anglais. Le jugement sera rendu le 14 décembre », *L'Intransigeant*, Paris, édition 25 novembre 1930 (Numéro 18663), 25 novembre 1930. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k793117q. p. 3.

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1930-12-09 : La Cyrénaïque aux héritiers d'Abdul Hamid

La Cyrénaïque aux héritiers d'Abdul Hamid

Un curieux procès s'engagera bientôt à Rome.

Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid réclameraient au gouvernement italien la restitution de 450.000 hectares de terre en Cyrénaïque comme ayant appartenu au feu sultan. La revendication porte en somme sur la Cyrénaïque tout entière.

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FRANCE COLONIALE MODERNE, « La Cyrénaïque aux héritiers d'Abdul Hamid », *Les Annales coloniales* : organe de la « France coloniale moderne » / directeur : Marcel Ruedel -- 1930-12-09 -- periodiques, Paris, édition 9 décembre 1930 (A31,N183), 9 décembre 1930. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k62808368. p. 3.

JAMIL ADRA

1930-12-17 : Heirs of Deposed Sultan. £16,000,000 Claim Rejected

HEIRS OF DEPOSED SULTAN.

£16,000,000 Claim Rejected.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Dec. 16.— A Turko-British tribunal has finally rejected a claim for £16.000,000 by the heirs' of Abdul Hamid (the last of the Sultans of the old Ottoman Empire who was deposed, when the republic was proclaimed in 1924 by a National Assembly). The claims were made by the heirs (who are exiled by a republican decree) in compensation for the confiscation of properties formerly held by Abdul.

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"Heirs of Deposed Sultan. £16,000,000 Claim Rejected", *West Australian* (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), Wednesday 17 December 1930, page 15. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article32990465

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1930-12-17 : Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid sont déboutés de leur demande

Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid sont déboutés de leur demande

Londres, 16 déc. (*dép. Petit Parisien.*) On mande de Constantinople à l'agence Reuter que le tribunal anglo-turc a débouté aujourd'hui de leur demande les douze héritiers (quatre veuves, une fille et sept fils) de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid II, qui réclamaient au gouvernement les biens appartenant à l'ancien monarque, d'une valeur estimée à 2 milliards de francs.

D'autre part, le tribunal mixte turco-italien, siégeant également à Constantinople, a rendu un jugement similaire en ce qui concerne les biens du sultan saisis en Palestine et à Benghazi.

Les deux cours ont basé leur décision sur les articles 60 et 65 du traité de Lausanne, qui rejettent précisément les réclamations des héritiers. Ceux-ci ont été condamnés à payer les frais du procès. Il semble désormais que toute action intentée en recouvrement de biens confisqués sera déclarée irrecevable.

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D'autre part, le tribunal mixte turco-italien, siégeant également à Constantinople, a rendu un jugement similaire en ce qui concerne les biens du sultan saisis en Palestine et à Benghazi.

Les deux cours ont basé leur décision sur les articles 60 et 65 du traité de Lausanne, qui rejettent précisément les réclamations des héritiers. Ceux-ci ont été condamnés à payer les frais du procès. Il semble désormais que toute action intentée en recouvrement de biens confisqués sera déclarée irrecevable.

« Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid sont déboutés de leur demande », *Le Petit Parisien* : journal quotidien du soir, Paris, France, édition 17 décembre 1930 (Numéro 19650), 17 décembre 1930. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6268529. p. 3.

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1930-12-17 : Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ont perdu leur procès

LES HERITIERS D'ABDUL HAMID ONT PERDU LEUR PROCES

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L'avocat du gouvernement britannique soutenait que les héritiers, ayant cédé leurs droits d'héritage à diverses compagnies anglaises, n'avaient plus qualité pour revendiquer quoi que ce soit et que les propriétés contestées n'avaient pas été saisies par le gouvernement britannique, mais légalement transférées à la Turquie.

Le tribunal, se rangeant à cet avis, s'est déclaré incompétent.

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« Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ont perdu leur procès », *L'Homme libre : journal quotidien du matin* / rédacteur en chef, Georges Clemenceau ; directeur, Fr. Albert -- 1930-12-17 -- periodiques, Paris, édition 17 décembre 1930 (A18,N5260), 17 décembre 1930. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7595537d. p. 3.

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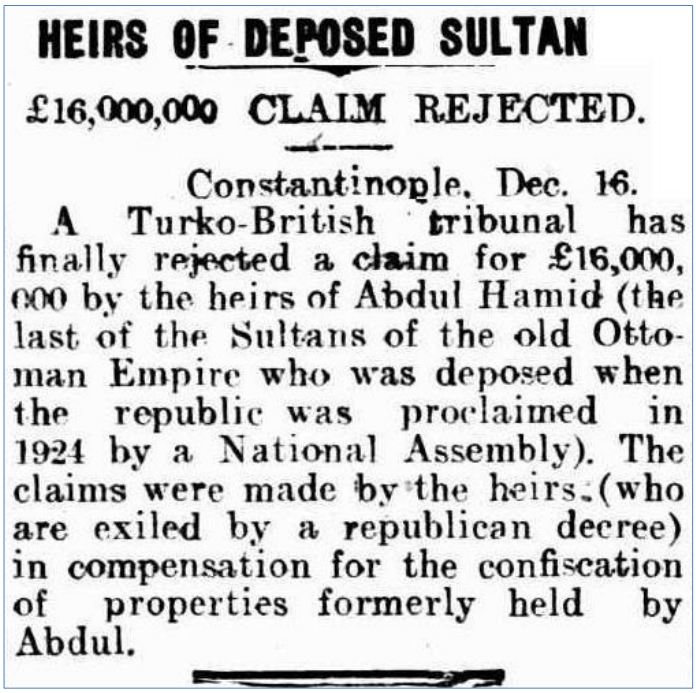
1930-12-19: Heirs of Deposed Sultan. £16,000,000 Claim Rejected

HEIRS OF DEPOSED SULTAN

£16,000,000 CLAIM REJECTED.

Constantinople, Dec. 16.

A Turko-British tribunal has finally rejected a claim, for £16,000,000 by the heirs of Abdul Hamid (the last of the Sultans of the old Ottoman Empire who was deposed when the republic was proclaimed in 1924 by a National Assembly). The claims were made by the heir's (who are exiled by a republican decree) in compensation, for the confiscation of . properties formerly held by Abdul.



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"Heirs of Deposed Sultan. £16,000,000 Claim Rejected", *Kalgoorlie Miner* (WA : 1895 - 1950), Friday 19 December 1930, page 5. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article95214196

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1930-12-30: Abdul Hamid's Heirs at Work

A RECORD CASE.

Abdul Hamid's Heirs at Work.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

CAIRO, NOV. 25.

The Turco-British Mixed Court In Constantinople has before It what Is probably one of the biggest Inheritance cases on record It is brought against the British Government by the relatives of the former reigning house of Othman, who have constituted themselves Into an association known as the "heirs of Abdul Hamid " These claimants are seeking to re-cover the vast estates all over the former Turkish Empire which were the personal property of the Sultan Abdul Hamid They have behind them various syndicates floated in Europe for the express purpose of assisting them to obtain their rights.

The present action is for the properties confiscated in Palestine and Iraq, which include the Mossul oilfields The heirs of Abdul Hamid claim that these oilfields were never part of the Got eminent Domain, but were purchased by Sultan Abdul Hamid himself and carefully registered as his personal property He was a far-seeing man, and realising what on important place oil would fill In the future, he took the precaution of earmarking this rich oil-bearing area as his own. According to the claimants the present Turkish Government recently gave a decision which supports the contention that the oilfields were the Sultan's private possession.

Considerable interest is taken in this cast because of the big financial Interests involved It is the last of a series of similar cases which have been heard during the past ten years by the French, Greek, and Italian Mixed Courts,

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Amongst the female claimants are seven widows of Sultans Two of them are UKI youngest widows of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and five are those of Sultan Wahid Eddin, including the beautiful gardeners daughter who was his last wife. All are living in obscurity and it is believed in penury, many seeking out a mean and bare existence in tumbled wooden hotels in the villages along the Bosphorus. Even the freed eunuchs of the palace, who can be seen walking any day about the streets dressed in the smartest European clothes, are better off than their erstwhile mistresses. Guarded by a few aged "Calfas" or Imperial nurses, they are selling off piece by piece the few treasures or relies of imperial finery which they saved from the wreck of the Imperial house. The property In Tin key of the male heirs has been sold by leave of the Angora Government But none of the proceeds has reached the women: it has all gone abroad to the male descendants

The financial backers of the present case believe that they will in the end get the support of Angora in this matter. They contend that, while the Turkish Government might not be prepared to interest itself on behalf of the exiled male members of the Imperial house it might well be induced to help its own subjects domiciled in Turkey and it is thought that if the British Tribunal at Constantinople follows the other International Tribunals and decides against the claimants to the Mossul oilfield, Angora will support an application to refer the question to the Hague International Court

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TURKISH WOMEN

Apropos of Turkish women Angora is doing Its utmost to abolish everything which is contrary to hygiene, progress, and modem ideas A new law has Just been enacted prohibiting the erection of the "Mushrabias" with which Oriental houses have been provided since time immemorial to prevent the womenfolk from being seen. Those that exist will not be removed, but just as no more wooden houses are to be built, so no more “grilles” are to be attached to windows. Angora considers that sun and air are more valuable to the health of the race than is privacy to its morals

Moreover the modern fad of birth control is receiving no countenance from the Turkish Ministry of Health. This has just announced that mothers of over six children are to receive a money grant, and that every province must keep a list of them and must budget a credit for them Physical culture, too, is being given great attention and the girls schools are adopting the latest European physical exercises. One of two Turkish newspapers is organising the third Turkish women’s beauty competition, and it calls for no shyness, to deter aspirants from coming forward from all ranks of society. It says that the object of these competitions is to display the perfection of Turkish womanhood to the world, and it Insists that the face Is not the only thing that will be the best. The body and its “eurhythmic” features will also be taken into account, perhaps to a greater degree than the face because the modern standard of feminine beauty includes also the body and its lines as in the days of the Greeks.

For this reason the last Turkish beauty queen underwent a long "slimming process" before she went to South America to compete for the world beauty prize. She was taken in hand by two Turkish women eurhythmists, who had studied physical culture in Berlin, and she was gradually brought to harmony and grace of line. These new health Ideas are bringing about a change in the Turkish view of feminine beauty. The full-fleshed silent, docile, lazy product of the idle life of the harem is no longer wanted. On the other hand, the extreme flatness of the most modem European type of feminine beauty is equally deprecated. The Turkish beauty type is now eminently an outdoor type made harmonious not by sport, but by scientific physical culture.

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“Abdul Hamid's Heirs at Work”. *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 30 December 1930, page 6. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16742514

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1931-01 : L'héritage d'Abdul Hamid

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Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ne se découragent pas. Il faut reconnaître, d'ailleurs, que l'enjeu de la partie en vaut la peine, puisque les propriétés de l'ancien sultan rouge, dont il s'agit de déterminer les véritables propriétaires, représentent des sommes que l'on n'ose même pas chiffrer. Déboutés par le tribunal franco-turc, les héritiers ont encore des procès engagés, devant les tribunaux d'arbitrage italo-turc et gréco-turc et devant les tribunaux turcs.

Cette fois, c'est le tribunal mixte d'arbitrage anglo-turc qui va avoir à rendre son arrêt. Les débats se sont ouverts à Constantinople, le 23 novembre. Présidé par le juge danois Hammerich, le tribunal est composé d'un juge anglais, M. Hill, et d'un juge turc, Memduh Bey. Le gouvernement britannique est représenté par M. Owen Wells, agent anglais auprès du tribunal, et par M. John Foster, mandaté par le Trésor britannique. La cause des plaignants est défendue par un des avocats les plus réputés de Constantinople, Me Masliyah.

M. Foster a ouvert les débats par un exposé fait en français. Sa thèse est que la loi votée par la Grande Assemblée, à Angora, en mars 1924, a enlevé aux membres, de la famille impériale descendants d'Osman la nationalité turque. Par ailleurs, d'après l'article 60 du Traité de Lausanne, les propriétés appartenant à la liste civile ottomane dans les régions ayant fait autrefois partie de l'Empire ottoman, ont été transférées aux puissances alliées. D'autre part, M. Foster a soutenu que les plaignants ne peuvent s'appuyer sur l'article 66 du Traité de Lausanne relatif à la restitution des biens, parce que l'affaire en question n'a rien à voir avec les cas exceptionnels de guerre que vise l'article 65.

Cette thèse a été réfutée par l'avocat des héritiers d'Abdul Hamid. Me Masliyah s'est efforcé de démontrer que la loi de mars 1924 avait pu enlever aux descendants d'Osman leurs droits politiques (mais qu'il était impossible de leur enlever la nationalité turque. L'article 60 du Traité de Lausanne, invoqué par M: Foster, n'est pas applicable, parce que les deux iradés impériaux de 1908 et 1909 qui avaient été révoqués par l'iradé de 1920 ne visaient pas les propriétés revendiquées, par les plaignants. En somme, l'argument britannique porterait à côté de l'objet du litige. Quant au troisième argument anglais, Me Masliyah lui a opposé qu'il est vraiment difficile de soutenir que l'héritage d'Abdul Hamid n'a pas été affecté par la guerre, alors qu'une clause du Traité de Lausanne a été insérée spécialement pour viser le cas.

L'agent du Gouvernement turc, Nashid Bey, a soutenu, au nom de son gouvernement, que la loi de mars 1924 a bien enlevé la nationalité turque aux fils et aux filles d'Abdul Hamid. Par contre, les veuves du souverain conserveraient leur nationalité. En dehors de ce point, le porte-parole du Gouvernement turc a soutenu les arguments de l'avocat des héritiers.

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Le Tribunal mixte anglo-turc de Constantinople a rendu son jugement le 16 décembre. Le Tribunal italo-turc s'est prononcé également. Les deux sentences écartent la compétence des tribunaux mixtes.

Samné (Georges), « L'héritage d'Abdul Hamid », *Correspondance d'Orient : revue économique, politique & littéraire* / directeurs : Chekri-Ganem, Dr Georges Samné, éd. C. ibn I. Ganem, 1931/01 (23ème année, N°397) Janvier 1931 (janvier 1931), Correspondance d'Orient. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Littérature et art, 8-Z-17965. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Littérature et art, 8-Z-17965, ark:/12148/bpt6k58055392. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k58055392. p. 37-38.

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1931-01-03: Claim to ex-Sultan's Fortune

A Record Case.

CLAIM TO EX-SULTAN'S FORTUNE.

Heirs Living in Poverty.

The Turco-British Mixed Court in Constantinople has before it what is probably one of the biggest inheritance cases on record.

It is brought against the British Government by the relatives of the former reigning house o£ Othman, who have constituted themselves into an association known as the "heirs of Abdul Hamid." These claimants are seeking to recover the vast estates all over the former Turkish Empire which were the personal property of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. They have behind them various syndicates floated in Europe for the express purpose of assisting them to obtain their rights, (reports a Cairo correspondent to Sydney "Morning Herald").

The present action la for the properties confiscated in Palestine and Iraq, which include the Mossul oilfields. The heirs of Abdul Hamid claim that these oilfields were never part of the Government Domain, but .were purchased by Sultan Abdul Hamid himself and carefully registered us his personal property. He was a far-seeing man, and, realising what an important place oil would fill in the future, he took the precaution of earmarking this rich oil-bearing area as his own. According to the claimants the present Turkish Government recently gave a decision which supports the contention that the oilfields were the Sultan's private possession.

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Considerable interest Is taken in this case because of the big financial Interests involved. It is the lust or a series of similar cases which have been heard during the past ten years by the French, Greek, and Italian Mixed Courts, established like the British under the Lausanne Treaty. In each instance the court, dealing with claims in respect of Abdul Humid estates situated in what is at present French, Greek, or Italian territory, decided against the heirs. There are in all twenty-seven claimants, mostly living in poverty. The male, heirs are all in exile: the female heiresses are still in Turkey, Kemal Pasha having decided that the women of the Imperial houses should be excepted from the decree of exile and be allowed to live in Turkey as Turkish subjects.

Seven Widows Claim.

Amongst the female claimants are seven widows of Sultans. Two of them are the youngest widows of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and five are those of Sultan Wahid Eddin, Including the beautiful gardener's daughter who was his last wife. All are living in obscurity and it is believed in penury, many ekeing out a mean and bare existence in tumbled wooden hovels in the villages along the Bosphorus. Even the freed eunuchs of the palace, who can be seen walking any day about the streets dressed in the smartest European clothes, are better off than their erstwhile mistresses. Guarded by a few aged 'Calfas' or Imperial nurses, they are selling off piece by piece the few treasures or relics of Imperial linery which they saved from the wreck of the Imperial house. The property in Turkey of the mule heirs has been sold by leave of the Angora Government.

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Turkish Women.

Apropos of Turkish women Angora is doing Its utmost to abolish everything which is contrary to hygiene, progress, and modem ideas A new law has Just been enacted prohibiting the erection of the "Mushrabias" with which Oriental houses have been provided since time immemorial to prevent the womenfolk from being seen. Those that exist will not be removed, but just as no more wooden houses are to be built, so no more “grilles” are to be attached to windows. Angora considers that sun and air are more valuable to the health of the race than is privacy to its morals

Moreover the modern fad of birth control is receiving no countenance from the Turkish Ministry of Health. This has just announced that mothers of over six children are to receive a money grant, and that every province must keep a list of them and must budget a credit for them Physical culture, too, is being given great attention and the girls schools…

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… are adopting the latest European physical exercises. One of two Turkish newspapers is organising the third Turkish women's beauty competition, and it calls for no shyness, to deter aspirants from coming forward from all ranks of society. It says that the object of these competitions is to display the perfection of Turkish womanhood to the world, and it Insists that the face Is not the only thing that will be the best. The body and its "eurhythmic" features will also be taken into account, perhaps to a greater degree than the face because the modern standard of feminine beauty includes also the body and its lines as in the days of the Greeks.

For this reason the last Turkish beauty queen underwent a long "slimming process" before she went to South America to compete for the world beauty prize. She was taken in hand by two Turkish women eurhythmists, who had studied physical culture in Berlin, and she was gradually brought to harmony and grace of line. These new health Ideas are bringing about a change in the Turkish view of feminine beauty. The full-fleshed silent, docile, lazy product of the idle life of the harem is no longer wanted. On the other hand, the extreme flatness of the most modem European type of feminine beauty is equally deprecated. The Turkish beauty type is now eminently an outdoor type made harmonious not by sport, but by scientific physical culture.

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"Claim to ex-Sultan's Fortune", *Daily Mercury* (Mackay, Qld. : 1906 - 1954), Saturday 3 January 1931, page 9. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article170740893

"Claim to ex-Sultan's Fortune", *Northern Miner* (Charters Towers, Qld. : 1874 - 1954), Monday 12 January 1931, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article80606683

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1931-01-13: Iraq Estates Historic Action

IRAQ ESTATES

HISTORIC ACTION.

Twenty-seven claimants, nil relations of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey, and financed by European syndicates, flonted for the express purpose of contesting those claims, have filed an historic action against the British Government, seeking recovery of vast estates in Palestine and Iraq, that are said to have been the personal property of the late Sultan.

The claimants have formed themselves into an association called "the heirs of Abdul Hamid", and they include seven widows of the former Sultan. The association has contested claims against the French, Greek and Italian Governments, but failed in each instance. With The Turkish-British court, in Constantinople, the claimants probably hope for better results.

Their claim is principally for the restorations of the Mossul oilfields in Iraq, which, they contend, was the personal property of Abdul Hamid. They contend further that Abdul realizing that oil would become a valuable commodity, secured the properties for himself and for his heirs, and that they ought to have been outside the scope of the Lausanne Treaty.

On paper, it looks to be a very sound plan, but neither the British nor the Turkish (Angora) Governments appear to be very concerned about it. The Angora Government, it appears, allowed some of Abdul's private property to be sold, and the proceeds to be distributed to the male heirs, but the money was squanderded, and practically all the claimants are now living in poverty.

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"Iraq Estates Historic Action", *Maitland Daily Mercury* (NSW : 1894 - 1939), Tuesday 13 January 1931, page 8. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article125156166

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1931-02-19: Sultan's Wealth. Claim To £16,000,000

SULTAN'S WEALTH

Claim to £16,000,000

Wealth beyond the dreams of avarice was involved in the claims of the heirs of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid — four widows, a daughter and seven sons — which were rejected by the Turko-British Arbitral Tribunal at Constantinople. The heirs sought to recover from the British Government £16,000,000 in respect of properties of the former ruler of Turkey in Irak and Palestine.

During his reign Abdul Hamid set himself to acquire by all the means in his power every available estate of value throughout the old Ottoman Empire. The consequence was that he not only possessed treasure in hard cash running into seven or eight millions sterling, but he was the registered owner – he always was careful to register his possessions – of land, palaces, factories, and farms valued conservatively at nearly £16,000,000.

The Court, which was presided by a Dane, M. Hammerich, rejected the claims under articles 60 and 65 of the Treaty of Lausanne, which specifically rules out the heirs. The Turko-Italian Arbitral Tribunal gave a similar decision in respect of the property of Abdul Hamid in Tripoli and Benghazi.

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"Sultan's Wealth. Claim To £16,000,000", *Maitland Daily Mercury* (NSW : 1894 - 1939), Thursday 19 February 1931, page 8. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article125151834

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1931-05-01: Dentist Backs Sultan s Heirs In Fight Over Billion Dollars

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By Priscilla RING

ISTANBUL. —(AP)— One of the biggest money contests in history , the claim of 21 heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid the Red for his colossal fortune , is returning to the limelight through the efforts of one man.

After 12 years of struggle, Dr. Samy Gunzberg, dentist to three sultans, one caliph, and to Mustapha Kemal, president of the new Turkey, is mapping a fresh campaign as representative of the heirs.

The mixed tribunals of Istanbul have refused to handle the case, which involves wealth of the richest monarch of the modern world.

His property, sweeping through Mesopotamia, the oil-fields of Mossul, Palestine, Syria, Tripoli, and Greece, was estimated at a billion dollars.

These properties brought the sultan a private revenue of four million gold liras, or $20,000,000 annually. Fifty thousand of the sultan s title deeds are in existence.

In their fight to regain the estate, 21 penniless heirs, six widows, nine daughters, and six sons are up against four governments — Great Britain, France, Italy and Greece — who control lands that were a part of the Ottoman Empire before the World war.

One government, that of Kemalist Turkey, is on the side of the six widows, whose Turkish citizenship it recognizes.

One man, a Jewish dentist of Istanbul, is the heart and brains of the fight. He is representative of the heirs and representative in Turkey of an American group which is pushing the claims, the Ottoman Imperial Estates Incorporation, whose headquarters are in Richmond, Va., and whose capital is $ 5,000,000. This man is Dr. Gunzberg.

“It was as imperial dentist”, he said, “that I felt it my duty to undertake the defense of the destitute Ottoman house.

“As a humanitarian I appeal to the royal families of England and Italy and to their jewel-boxes in which still sparkle the brilliants and diamonds given to them by Sultan Abdul Hamid , to see that their governments restore to that sultan s penniless heirs the property which belonged to their sire.

“Have the courts of Italy and England forgotten their friendship with Abdul Hamid, and can they condemn as they do the Soviets treatment of the Russian royal family while they themselves withhold rightful wealth from the sultan s heirs?

But the dynamic dentist-lawyer is using weightier weapons then rhetoric. He is setting in motion the diplomatic machinery of the Turkish republic to induce Great Britain France and Italy, to indemnify Hamid’s six widows.

The mixed tribunals established here by the Treaty of Lausanne declared themselves incompetent to handle the claims on the grounds that Turkish citizens were not involved, and that the properties were not private but state domains.

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So the Turkish government decided to send notes to England, France and Italy contesting the mixed tribunals' decisions and asking to what jurisdiction the heirs should now appeal.

"If these governments reply favorably," Dr. Gunzberg said, "I shall carry the claims before the courts of England, France and Italy. If they reply unfavorably, I shall take the case to the Hague with the support of Turkey."

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RING (Priscilla), « Dentist Backs Sultan s Heirs In Fight Over Billion Dollars », *Daily Illini*, Student Newspaper of the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, IL, USA, édition N°199, 1 mai 1931. Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections. URL : https://idnc.library.illinois.edu/?a=d&d=DIL19310501.2.184&e=-------en-20--1--img-txIN--------- . p. 17.

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1931-05-25: Abdul Hamid in Exile. Ex.Sultan Guarded Night and Day

ABDUL HAMID IN EXILE.

Ex.Sultan Guarded Night and Day.

Interesting particulars of Abdul Hamid's life in the Villa Allatini, at Salonika, are published at Constantinople. The ex-Sultan does not live alone in his exile. He has with him two sons, Abdul Rahim Effendi and Abid Effendi, his three daughters, eleven women of his former harem, and thirteen servants. A company of infantry 100 strong, some fifty gendarmes, a dozen policemen, three superintendents of police, and twelve officers maintain constant watch on the villa and its approaches. All round the house and grounds a body of sentries, about 60 ft. from one another, keep watch and ward by day and night.

Abdul Hamid does not suffer from his confinement. It must be remembered that during the thirty-three years of his reign he had not lived otherwise, for he rarely left his palace at Yildiz, which was but a gilded captivity. What is rather new to him are peace and security. He has no more anxieties, no more conspiracies to frustrate, no espionage to organise, no revolts to punish ; in a word, no more of the feverish, tormented, uncertain life of his reign. He appears, indeed, to be pleased with his new existence. No longer does he suffer from his former frequent and terrible fits of passion.

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"Abdul Hamid in Exile. Ex.Sultan Guarded Night and Day", *Warialda Standard and Northern Districts' Advertiser* (NSW : 1900 - 1954), Monday 25 May 1931, page 3. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article214508430

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1931-06-11: Sultan's Gold-Struggle by Heirs

SULTAN'S GOLD.

ONE of the biggest money contests in history, the claim of 21 heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid the Red, for his colossal fortune, is returning to the limelight through the efforts of one man, reports an Istanbul correspondent.

After 12 years of struggle, he says, Dr. Samy Gunzberg, dentist to three sultans, one Caliph, and to Mustapha Kemal, President of the New Turkey, is mapping a fresh campaign as representative of the heirs.

The mixed tribunals of Istanbul have refused to handle the case, which involves wealth of the richest monarch of the modern world.

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These properties brought the Sultan a private revenue of four million gold liras, or 20,000,000 dollars annually. Fifty thousand of the Sultan's title deeds are in existence.

In their fight to regain the estate, 21 penniless heirs, six widows, nine daughters, and six sons are up against four Governments — Great Britain, France, Italy, and Greece — who control lands that were a part of the Ottoman empire before the World War.

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"As a humanitarian I appeal to the Royal Families of England and Italy, and to their jewel boxes in which still sparkle the brilliants and diamonds given to them by Sultan Abdul Hamid, to see that their Governments restore to that Sultan's penniless heirs the property that belonged to their sire.

"Have the courts of Italy and England forgotten their friendship with Abdul Hamid, and can they condemn as they do the Soviet's treatment of the Russian Royal Family while they themselves withhold rightful wealth from the Sultan's heirs?"

Turkish Diplomacy.

But the dynamic dentist-lawyer is using weightier weapons than rhetoric. He is setting in motion the diplomatic machinery of the Turkish Republic to induce Great Britain France, and Italy to indemnify

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"Sultan's Gold-Struggle by Heirs". *Queenslander* (Brisbane, Qld. : 1866 - 1939), Thursday 11 June 1931, page 5. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article23140012

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1934-02-24 : La succession d'Abdul Hamid serait de huit milliards

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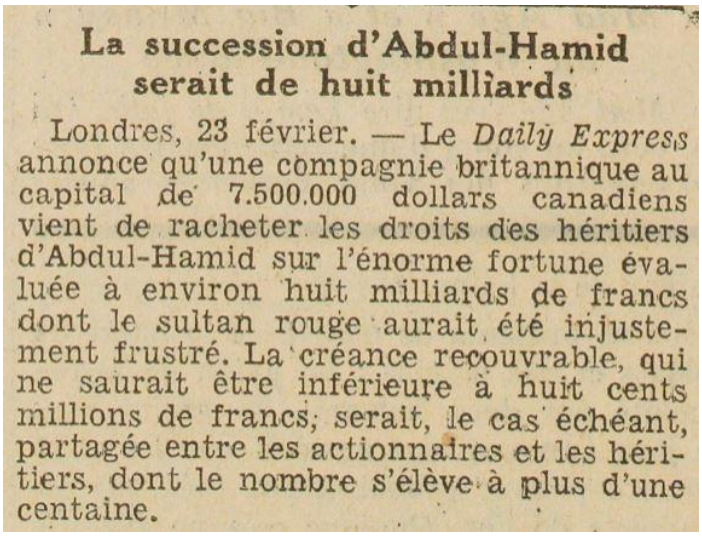
Londres, 23 février. — Le Daily Express annonce qu'une compagnie britannique au capital de 7.500.000 dollars canadiens vient de racheter, les droits des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid sur l'énorme fortune évaluée à environ huit milliards de francs dont le sultan rouge aurait, été injustement frustré. La créance recouvrable, qui ne saurait être inférieure à huit cents millions de francs, serait, le cas échéant, partagée entre les actionnaires et les héritiers, dont le nombre s'élève à plus d'une centaine.



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« La succession d'Abdul Hamid serait de huit milliards », *Notre temps* : paraît chaque mois / directeur Jean Luchaire?; rédacteur en chef Jacques Chabannes -- 1934-02-24 -- periodiques, Paris, édition 24 février 1934 (Année 8, N°50), 24 février 1934. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4786128z. p. 4.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1934-02-24 : Le partage de la succession de l'ex-sultan Abdul-Hamid

Le partage de la succession de l'ex-sultan Habdul-Hamid

Il donnera lieu à de multiples procès internationaux

Londres. 23 février. Ou annonce la fondation d'une société au capital de 7500.000 dollars canadiens et ayant pour but de s'entendre avec les héritiers de l'ex-sultan Abdul Hamid pour le partage de la succession. laquelle se monterait à environ 100 millions de livres sterling. On compte récupérer 50 millions de livres sterling. Déduction faite des dépenses prévues (et elles sont nombreuses), Il resterait un bénéfice de 10 millions de livres sterling pour les actionnaires. Toutefois. ce bénéfice devrait être partagé de moitié avec les héritiers du sultan qui sont, dit-on au nombre de cent.

On prévoit de longs procès avec plusieurs gouvernements. Les pays intéressés dans cette affaire sont la Grande-Bretagne, la France, l'Italie, la Turquie, la Palestine et la Grèce. Des avocats internationaux ont été engagés pour commencer cette lutte légale, en premier lieu avec le gouvernement britannique. dans une affaire qui viendrait en jugement au début du mois de mars.

La société, oui porte le nom de Consolidated Eastern Corporation, comptera surtout, pour s'assurer des bénéfices, sur les droits qui pourront être réclamés dans les concessions de pétrole de l'Irak.

Le partage de la succession de l'ex-sultan Habdul-Hamid

Il donnera lieu à de multiples procès internationaux

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« Le partage de la succession de l'ex-sultan Abdul-Hamid », *L'Ouest-Éclair*, Rennes, France, édition 24 février 1934 (Numéro 13624), 24 février 1934. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k499899f. p. 3.

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1934-03-30 : À propos du procès Intenté par la Princesse Youssoupoff à la M.G.M.

CHRONIQUE JURIDIQUE

À propos du procès Intenté par la Princesse Youssoupoff à la M. G. M.

La presse relate actuellement les péripéties d'un procès entre Compagnie Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Ltd et la princesse Irina Alexandrovna, femme du prince Youssoupoff et nièce de l'ancien tsar Nicolas II, procès dont la première partie vient d'avoir sa conclusion.

La princesse se plaignait qu'un des personnages du film intitulé (en Angleterre) : *Raspoutine, le moine fou*, pouvait être pris pour elle, et que, sous le nom de princesse Natacha, elle était représentée sous un aspect à la fois défavorable et contraire à la réalité historique.

La princesse Youssoupoff poursuivit pour diffamation devant les tribunaux britanniques la Metro-Goldwyn en paiement de dommages intérêts et en suppression du film.

La Cour du Banc du Roi rendit son jugement le 5 mars dernier. Elle donnait entièrement raison à la plaignante, reconnaissant le, bien-fondé de son action. La Compagnie Metro-Goldwyn fut condamnée à payer la somme de 25.000 livres à titre de dommages-intérêts et à la suppression de son film. Elle dut, en outre, supporter les dépens, s'élevant à la somme de 15.000 livres environ.

L'on annonce que la Metro-Goldwyn a fait appel de ce jugement, dont les conséquences sont très dures pour elle.

Le jugement du tribunal anglais vient en l'occurrence renforcer une fois de plus la jurisprudence universellement admise en la matière.

Il arrive, en effet, bien souvent, que l'on mette en scène des événements réels ; ceux qui sont passés dans l'histoire ont un âge qui permet de prendre avec eux des libertés. Mais s'il s'agit de retracer des événements dont les témoins, ou leurs descendants proches sont nos contemporains, on peut s'attendre à des réclamations fort justifiées.

Il en est de même si, dans une intrigue quelconque, on donne à un personnage un nom calqué ou, semblable à celui de quelque célébrité contemporaine, qui peut s'estimer la plupart du temps fort mécontente du rôle qu'on lui fait jouer.

Les annales juridiques contiennent de nombreux exemples de ce genre de procès. Pour n'en citer qu'un, nous, ne rappellerons que celui du film intitulé *Le Sultan rouge*, qui avait soulevé les protestations des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid.

Semblables décisions sont justes et équitables. Et si le chiffre de dommages-intérêts alloué par les tribunaux anglais est notablement plus élevé que celui qu'auraient vraisemblablement alloué en pareille matière les tribunaux français, nous avons de fortes raisons de croire que le fonds du jugement eût été le même.

Marcel CAUVET,
Avocat à la Cour.

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« CINE-COMŒDIA »
est lu par
tous les
Cinéphiles

« A propos du procès intenté par la Princesse Youssoupoff à la M. G. M. », *Comoedia* / rédacteur en chef : Gaston de Pawlowski, Paris, édition 30 mars 1934 (28e année, Numéro 7720), sect. Chronique juridique, 30 mars 1934. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k76479415. p. 6.

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1934-04-18: Fight for Tyrant's Millions. Riches of “Abdul the Damned”

FIGHT for TYRANT'S MILLIONS

Riches of “Abdul the Damned”

A British company with a capital of 7,500,000 Canadian dollars has been formed to prosecute the most astonishing claim to millions, on record.

The company has come to an agreement with the heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid-"Abdul the Damned"-the tyrant who ruled the Turkish Empire for 33 years, and has acquired their rights in the enormous fortune of which the Sultan is said to have been wrongfully dispossessed.

The company which has undertaken to recover the lost fortune, the Consolidated Eastern Corporation, Ltd., states in its circular that Abdul Hamid is believed to have left a fortune of £100,000,000.

The recoverable value of the property is estimated at roughly £30,000,000, and "at a conservative estimate, after payment of all outgoings, percentages, etc., the corporation should receive not less than £10,000,000."

Shareholders and the heirs of the Sultan-there are more than 100 of these are to divide the proceeds on a fifty-fifty basis.

Negotiation and perhaps litigation on a grand scale with many Governments will be necessary to advance the claims.

The countries concerned in this fight for millions are Britain, France, Italy, Turkey, Palestine, and Greece.

Famous international lawyers have been retained by the corporation, and it is stated that a case is to be submitted to the British Government.

Abdul Hamid, who was deposed in 1909 and died in 1918, is said to have had vast estates in many lands.

The Consolidated Eastern Corporation states that the most valuable rights are oil concessions in Iraq.

There are also, it is said, vast tracts of agricultural land between the Tigris and Euphrates, as well as rich properties in Syria, Palestine, Greece, and Tripoli.

That her father had been regarded as a tyrant is keenly resented by the beautiful, dark-eyed Princess Nayme, Abdul's second daughter.

From the fairy-like palaces of her childhood, fate and the pre-war revolution of the Young Turks had transported Princess Nayme to a modest dwelling in a side street of Nice.

"They called my father a tyrant," she said to an interviewer. "How could anyone who was so marvelously kind to his children be a tyrant? Instead of Abdul the Damned they ought to have called him Abdul the Just!"

"That awful nickname," she declared, "was only an epithet hurled at him by the Young Turks as part of their political campaign.

"I wish," she went on reminiscently, "you could have seen father and you would know. How well I remember him! It seems only yesterday that he rocked me on his knee and ran his fingers through my hair.

"We were thirteen children, six girls and seven boys, yet he found time for all of us, and before he died he had made provision for every one. Each of us was to have an equal share in the estate.

"That was exceptional, for in Turkey in those days boys

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"We were thirteen children, six girls and seven boys, yet he found time for all of us, and before he died he had made provision for every one. Each of us was to have an equal share in the estate.

"That was exceptional, for in Turkey in those days boys were entitled to the lion's share of an inheritance. The girls were almost neglected."

As Princess Nayme said this she fingered a magnificent diamond collar adorning her neck.

"This is a memory of father; he gave it to me," she said. "It is all I have. That and this," she added, pointing to two photographs.

"My children," she explained, "Prince Djahid Osman and Princess Adile Chevket.

"They live with me here. Djahid is trying to get a start in the business world."

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Fight for Tyrant's Millions. Riches of “Abdul the Damned”. *World's News* (Sydney, NSW : 1901 - 1955), Wednesday 18 April 1934, page 18. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article136997654

JAMIL ADRA

1934-05-25: Tyrant's Fortune-Claim To Lost Millions

Tyrant's Fortune

CLAIM TO LOST MILLIONS.

A British company with a capital of - 7,500,000 Canadian dollars has been formed to prosecute the most astonishing clam to millions on-record.

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Abdul Hamid, who was deposed in 1909 and. died in 1918, is said to have had vast estates in many lands to which his heirs are clearly entitled.

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There are also, it is -stated, vast tracts of agricultural land between the Tibris and Euphrates, as well as rich properties in Syria, Palestine, Greece and Tripoli.

The recent treaty between France and Turkey concerning Syria establishes, according to the corporation, the rights of those heirs who remain Turkish nationals.

The corporation has informed shareholders that the deal with the French Government is, expected to produce £5,000,000, and that a deal with the Greek Government should realise £300,000 in cash and approximately £2,000,000 in bonds.

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"Tyrant's Fortune. Claim To Lost Millions", *Nambucca and Bellinger News* (NSW : 1911 - 1945), Friday 25 May 1934, page 5. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article217859115

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1935-08-05: Turkish Prince Kills Himself

TURKISH PRINCE KILLS HIMSELF.

Marriage Plan Failed.

NEW YORK, Saturday.

Prince Abdul Kerim (31), whom the police identified as a grandson of Abdul Hamid, the second last Prince of Turkey and son of the Crown Prince, shot and killed himself in a room of the chief Broadway hotel.

Only 75 cents was found among his effects. An almost empty liquor bottle was left on a table.

In a suicide note addressed to the police Kerim said: "I am destroying myself because of my failure to win a wealthy American woman in marriage, with whose help I had hoped to restore my family in Turkey."

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"Turkish Prince Kills Himself", *Advocate* (Burnie, Tas. : 1890 - 1954), Monday 5 August 1935, page 1. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86562516

"Prince of Turkey Ends Life Here." *New York Times*. Aug. 4, 1935, p. 21.

"Prince, Suicide Here, To Get Royal Burial." *New York Times*. Aug. 7, 1935, p. 10.

"Rites for Turkish Prince." *New York Times*. Aug. 11, 1935, p. 26.

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1935-08-05: Le prince Abdulkérim, petit-fils d'Abdul Hamid, s'est suicidé

La fin tragique d'un aventurier

Le prince Abdulkérim,
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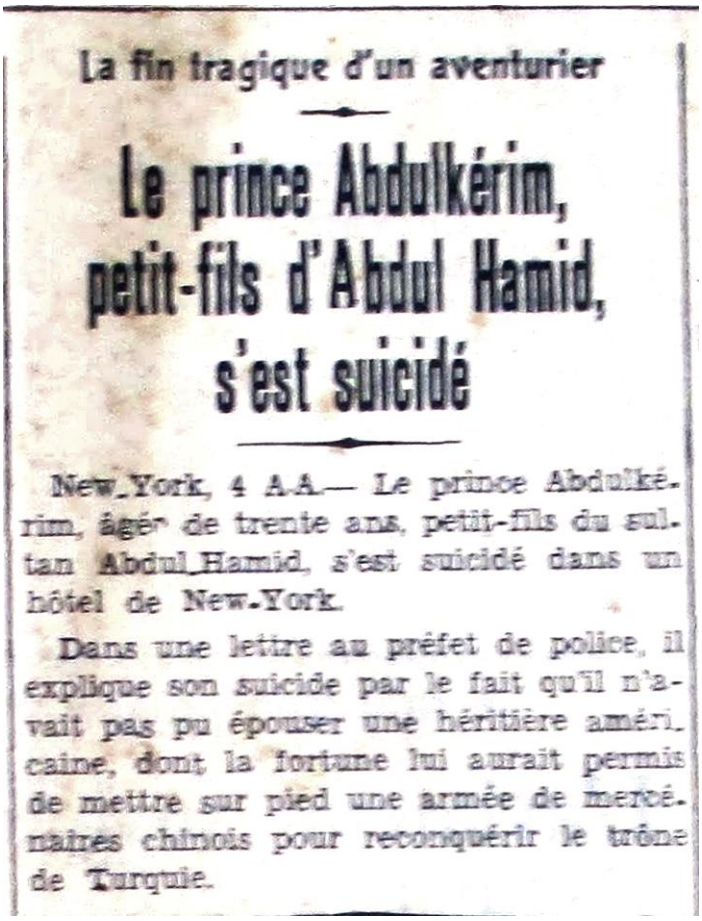
New York, 4 A.A. – Le prince Abdulkérim, âgé de trente ans, petit-fils du sultan Abdul Hamid, s'est suicidé dans un hôtel a New York.

Dans une lettre au préfet de police, il explique son suicide par le fait qu'il n'avait pas pu épouser une héritière américaine, dont la fortune lui aurait permis de mettre sur pied une armée de mercenaires chinois pour reconquérir le trône de Turquie.



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« La fin tragique d'un aventurier. Le prince Abdulkérim, petit-fils d'Abdul Hamid s'est suicidé », *La République*. 5 août 1935, p. 1.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1935-09-01 : Le Sultan rouge - Good Fairy Car 99 - Mr. Sherlock et Mrs. Holmes

LE SULTAN ROUGE — GOOD FAIRY CAR 99 — Mr. SHERLOCK et Mrs. HOLMES

Le succès d'*Henri VIII* à déterminé, en Angleterre, toute une floraison de films historiques. Bien peu furent excellents et parmi les échecs les plus retentissants on a pu signaler, l'an dernier, ceux de *Catherine de Russie*, de *Neil Gwyn*, du *Dictateur*. Mais nous savons que les Anglais ont de la suite dans les idées. « Puisque le passé ne nous réussit guère, se sont-ils dit, cherchons du côté de l'histoire contemporaine. » C'est pourquoi sans doute ils ont choisi pour héros d'un récent film cet Aabdul-Hamid que sa férocité fit surnommer le Sultan Rouge et qui fut détrôné en 1909.

Cette révolution nous est racontée avec un luxe de détails qui, autant que j'en puisse juger, paraissent sortis pour une bonne part de l'imagination des scénaristes. Les souvenirs que je garde de cet épisode sont assez vagues; dans mon enfance, j'ai souvent entendu parler des luttes que se livraient alors, à Constantinople, Vieux-Turcs et Jeunes-Turcs ; j'ai frémi au récit des massacres d'Arméniens ordonnés par Abdul-Hamid et je me rappelle encore ce jour d'avril 1909 où les journaux annoncèrent qu'une armée levée à Salonique par les insurgés était entrée à Constantinople et avait déposé le sultan.

Toutefois, ma connaissance des choses…

le Cinéma

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…turques n'est pas suffisante pour me permettre de vérifier si une jeune Viennoise entra vraiment alors dans le harem du sultan, ni si celui-ci possédait un sosie destiné à déjouer les complots et les machinations. Mais ce n'est pas à un cours d'histoire que nous sommes conviés et si les auteurs ont brodé autour d'une action déjà passablement romanesque, s'ils ont même parfois un peu forcé la note, leur film n'en est pas moins fort attachant. On sait que l'on n'en pourrait dire autant de la plupart des bandes anglaises, généralement lentes, grises, solennelles et passablement ennuyeuses.

Pour *Le Sultan Rouge*, d'ailleurs, les Anglais se sont bornés à fournir les techniciens et les figurants, puisque le metteur en scène et le principal interprète sont Allemands. Ni l'un ni l'autre ne sont des inconnus pour nous : Karl Grüne fut, il y a une douzaine d'années, un des artisans du cinéma expressionniste, et nous lui devons *La Rue* qui, avec *Caligari* et *La Nuit de la Saint-Sylvestre*, constitue une des étapes essentielles du film muet. Après nous avoir donné *Les Frères Schellenberg* et *Jalousie*, il sombra dans les productions commerciales. *Le Sultan Rouge* est la première œuvre de quelque importance à laquelle son nom se soit attaché depuis bien longtemps.

Dans cette demi-retraite, il semble avoir acquis une maîtrise nouvelle et, si les mouvements de foule sont faibles, si les scènes d'émeutes qui achèvent le film manquent de conviction, l'ensemble est fort honorable et certains tableaux ont de la force et de l'émotion. On ne peut que lui reprocher certaines analogies un peu faciles comme celle des menottes qui emprisonnent les mains du héros pendant que des bracelets de diamants se ferment sur les poignets de l'héroïne. Mais on ne saurait trop le louer d'avoir tenté de dégager l'élément humain d'une aventure qui aurait pu devenir si aisément un pur mélo.

Il faut dire qu'il a trouvé un collaborateur précieux en Fritz Kortner ; comédien rompu aux ficelles de la scène et de l'écran, celui-ci, s'il charge un peu son personnage, s'il met trop d'intention dans tous ses gestes, ne nous en donne pas moins du vieux sultan une image non dépourvue de vérité. Le décorateur a été moins heureux ; son évocation de Constantinople sent le carton-pâte et si la reconstitution du palais du sultan est meilleure, c'est qu'Abdul-Hamid vivait dans un décor d'un goût des plus douteux : tous ceux qui ont visité le Grand Sérail ne me contrediront pas.

turques n'est pas suffisante pour me permettre de vérifier si une jeune Viennoise entra vraiment alors dans le harem du sultan, ni si celui-ci possédait un sosie destiné à déjouer les complots et les machinations. Mais ce n'est pas à un cours d'histoire que nous sommes conviés et si les auteurs ont brodé autour d'une action déjà passablement romanesque, s'ils ont même parfois un peu forcé la note, leur film n'en est pas moins fort attachant. On sait que l'on n'en pourrait dire autant de la plupart des bandes anglaises, généralement lentes, grises, solennelles et passablement ennuyeuses.

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« Le Sultan rouge - Good Fairy Car 99 - Mr. Sherlock et Mrs. Holmes », *La Femme de France*, n° 1063 (septembre 1935). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5527387w. p. 20.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1935-10-15 : Turkish Prince Passes

Round the World

Turkish Prince Passes

A TURKISH Prince shot himself dead in a New York hotel recently. He had exactly 3/ left in his possession. He was Prince Abdul Kerim, 29, son of the former Crown Prince Selim of Turkey, and grandson of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid n. ("Abdul The Damned"), who was deposed In 1909. Prince Abdul Kerim was disappointed by the failure of his efforts to marry an American heiress who would have been willing to finance an attempt to restore the Sultanate. This was the reason for his suicide, according to a letter he left for the police. The young man's childhood had been passed in surroundings of extravagant splendour, but his entire property when he died consisted of the clothes he was wearing, a cheap suitcase, a few shirts and ties, three pairs of glasses, and a small screwdriver. Almost his only friend in New York was Shah Mir Effendi, who was Turkish Consul-General in the city for many years. According to the letter left for the police the Prince came to the United States last September from China, where, he stated, he had sought support for a possible restoration of his family's fortunes on behalf of his father. He said he had hoped to marry an American woman with sufficient wealth to enable him to return to China and raise am army of mercenaries and river bandits and march on Istanbul in an attempt to overthrow the Turkish Republic. He failed in this quest and fell in love with a married woman in the New York suburb where he took lodgings. He asked her, he stated, to obtain a divorce and marry him, but she refused and thus reduced him completely to despair. A claim to £16,000,000 worth of property made against Britain by four widows, a daughter, and seven sons of Abdul Hamid was made in Istanbul in 1930, but failed. The property is in Irak and Palestine.—"Daily Telegraph."

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"Turkish Prince Passes", *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1864 - 1946), Saturday 12 October 1935, page 7. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article141763882

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1936-04-25 : L'ancien sultan Adbul Hamid débouté d'une plainte contre l'Etat français

L'ancien sultan Adbul Hamid
débouté d'une plainte contre l'Etat français

Istamboul, 24 avril. — Le tribunal mixte franco-turc a rejeté la plainte des héritiers de l'ancien sultan Abdul Hamid, contre l'État français, auquel ceux-ci réclamaient une indemnité pour les propriétés que le sultan possédait en Syrie.

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« L'ancien sultan Adbul Hamid débouté d'une plainte contre l'Etat français », *L'Ouest-Éclair*, Rennes, France, édition 25 avril 1936 (Numéro 14415), 25 avril 1936. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k631399n. Consulté le 28 janvier 2020, p. 1.

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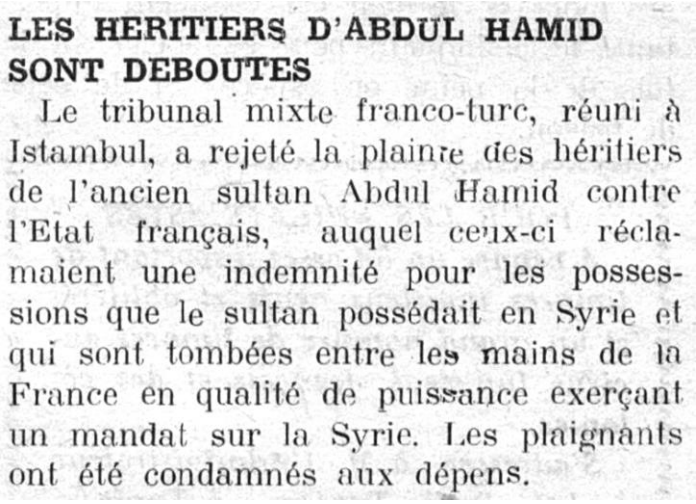
1936-05-05 : Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid sont déboutés

LES HÉRITIERS D'ABDUL HAMID SONT DÉBOUTÉS

Le tribunal mixte franco-turc, réuni à Istanbul, a rejeté la plainte des héritiers de l'ancien sultan Abdul Hamid contre l'Etat français, auquel ceux-ci réclamaient une indemnité pour les possessions que le sultan possédait en Syrie et qui sont tombées entre les mains de la France en qualité de puissance exerçant un mandat sur la Syrie. Les plaignants ont été condamnés aux dépens.



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« Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid sont déboutés », *La Petite Tunisie* : journal républicain indépendant... exilé de Tunis -- 1936-05-05 -- périodique hebdomadaire, Constantine, Tunisie, édition 1936/05/05 (Numéro 2362)-1936/05/12., 5 mai 1936. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5803106. p. 1.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1937-01-08: Sacked Himself To Make A Fortune

SACKED HIMSELF TO MAKE A FORTUNE

AND NOW HE IS A MULTIMILLIONAIRE

He started with nothing, but grit and hard work have won him untold wealth.

A FEW months ago, some brawny French workmen marched into a massive cream-colored, mansion in Paris's West End and carefully carried out a number of huge packages which they placed in waggons.

In those packages were some of the greatest oil-paintings in the world, each one worth a fortune! Thanks to the enterprise of the brilliant young director of the British National Gallery, these paintings were being lent to England

Behind that piece of news lies the story of one of the most remarkable men of our time, a man of whom, perhaps, only one in a thousand has heard. It is the story of a little boy in an obscure and tragic eastern country who resolved to become rich — and did so!

Shrouded in Mystery

In the town of Erzerum, in the old Turkish Empire, over seventy years ago, a boy was born to whom his parents gave the name- Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian.

As he grew up the boy travelled a little. He saw the Black Sea port of Trebizond; he got to the teeming city of Constantinople and felt the need of money. It is rumoured that he even got as far as Liverpool, but these years are shrouded in mystery, and no one knows for certain.

In the eighties of last century the oil-fields of Baku, in the Caucasus, were being developed, and big fortunes were being made by shrewd speculators in land and oil. Many of the most successful of these were Armenians, who grew fat and rich, built vast palaces and employed small armies of hired thugs to protect their property.

One of these Armenians was called Mantacheff — a millionaire, thanks to his huge oil properties. In Moscow and - St. Petersburg he was -famous for his luxurious parties and his well-stocked racing stable, the finest in Russia.

Young Gulbenkian came to Baku, saw that there was money to be made from oil and resolved to learn the business from A to Z. He got an office job in Mantacheff's firm, sat tight for a few years, then coolly re- signed. He knew his own (programme perfectly.

Emerged Triumphant

The financial centres of Western Europe were his next objective. He knew oil; now lie must get to know money. Paris, London, Berlin, Amsterdam, all received the silent, ambitious young Asiatic.

In the province of Mosul in. the realm of Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, experts said there was a huge oilfield. It was in 1913,- and German, British, French and American groups all elbowed one another in the court of Abdul to get this concession.

After tremendously involved financial dealings, the great war broke out, and shortly afterwards British interests emerged triumphant, controlling, on paper, three-quarters of

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A Stern Fight

From 1914 to 1919 Allenby, Townshead and Lawrence fought to save that oil. From 1919 to the present day, secret and open financial struggles have gone on to get control of it. Thanks to various conferences, the oil is now controlled internationally, four big trusts having a share in it, and one individual—M. Gulbenkian.

Despite every attempt to manoeuvre him from his commanding position in the world of oil, M. Gulbenkian sits tight. Elderly, solitary, immensely rich, thanks to his huge holdings of important stocks, M. Gulbenkian is a British subject who is believed to have declined a title.

He lives in a great square mansion near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, in a quarter where millionaires abound. In this house is the finest collection of oil-paintings in the world. And behind that collection, too, there are many engrossing stories.

To-day, Time has played a queer trick on the man who started Gulbenkian in the industry which brought him millions.

Mantacheff, fellow-Armenian, was a Russian citizen. Gulbenkian, anticipating the revolution, never was, and never kept his money in Russia.

Poor Once Again

In 1917 Mantacheff fled. He just got out of the Ukraine, and all he had was a few of his best oil-paintings and his oil rights. In Warsaw, almost penniless, he was helped by a negro jockey, Wingfield, who had ridden for him in Russia. He got to Paris, sold his rights (on paper) to the new communised oilfields of Baku to speculators, and had a good time on the proceeds.

Soon he was poor again, and was compelled to sell his last assets—his pictures.

The best buyer he could find was another Armenian, and a man in the oil business. It was none other than the boy he had employed nearly fifteen years before—Calouste Gulbenkian.

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"Sacked Himself To Make A Fortune", *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (NSW : 1896 - 1938), Friday 8 January 1937, page 43. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article102695228

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1937-09-14: Huit nations se disputent les 8 milliards du “Sultan rouge

Les huit milliards d’Abd Ul Hamid le sultan rouge

…sont disputés par huit nations une vingtaine d'ayants droit et une foule d'aventuriers

« Les Millions du Sultan rouge ! » Quel magnifique titre de roman de mystère et d'aventure ! Si quelques-unes des plus grandes puissances du monde n'étaient intéressées à cette affaire qui va venir bientôt devant le tribunal de Zurich on pourrait croire qu'il ne s'agit que d'une extravagante et chimérique aventure dans le genre de celle de « l'héritage du prisonnier espagnol ».

Effectivement, il s'agit là d'un héritage. Et quel héritage ! Celui du sultan rouge, Abdul Hamid, décédé en 1918. Le procès tourne autour de quelque cinquante millions de livres sterling, près de six milliards de francs !

Manfred Georg.

(Suite en page 3.)

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Abd-ul-Hamid

Huit nations se disputent les 8 milliards du « Sultan rouge »

(SUITE DE LA PREMIERE PAGE)

Les plaideurs, plaignants et défendeurs sont dispersés aux quatre coins du monde et deux procès sont greffés l'un sur l'autre. A cette gigantesque affaire, sont intéressés la Syrie, la Mésopotamie, l'Irak, la Palestine, la Tripolitaine, la Cyrénaïque, l'Albanie, la Transjordanie; tous les héritiers, en somme, de l'ancien empire ottoman.

C'est dire que derrière les Etats que nous venons de citer se trouvent l'Angleterre, la France, l'Italie, la Grèce, la Turquie, et, par suite d'intérêts économiques considérables, l'Amérique. Le Canada, lui-même, a pris place dans ce débat international.

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Ce procès requiert des parties en présence et des juges des connaissances encyclopédiques.

Qu'on en juge : au cours des débats, on traitera de science juridique, de droit international et de droit naturel, de l'histoire de la guerre, de l'ethnographie, de la géographie, de la géologie et de la cosmographie, du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes, de savoir si les richesses d'un pays naguère monarchique appartiennent au monarque ou à la nation, etc., etc.

Les vingt-deux héritiers et le pacifiste américain

Lorsque le sultan Abdul Hamid mourut en 1918, il laissait à ses vingt-deux héritiers une fortune considérable dispersée dans tout l'empire ottoman. Cet empire fut démembré à la fin de la guerre. Les héritiers du sultan prétendent se faire payer leur héritage par les puissances « héritières » elles-mêmes de l'empire ottoman. Mais ces puissances sont, à des degrés divers, à la fois héritières, débitrices et créancières du défunt empire. Certaines d'entre elles, en effet, avaient consenti des emprunts à l'empire ottoman ; elle en sont donc créancières ; mais, à la fin de la guerre, elles ont reçu en partage une partie de cet empire, ce qui fait qu'elles sont débitrices vis-à-vis des porteurs de fonds ottomans, puisqu'elles sont héritières de cet empire avec les charges qu'implique tout héritage.

On comprend que les vingt-deux héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ne se sentirent pas très rassurés quand ils virent qu'on partageait sans les consulter ce qu'ils estimaient être, en partie, leur héritage. Certains d'entre eux se mirent en rapport avec un très curieux homme : John de Kay, citoyen américain, auteur de livres pacifistes, et qui joua dans les coulisses des plus colossales entreprises financières du monde un étrange rôle de conseiller secret. M. John de Kay ne voyageait qu'en train spécial et traitait de pair à compagnon avec les diplomates de l'ancien et du nouveau monde. Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid lui confièrent leurs intérêts. Tout allait bien quand, un beau jour, cet étrange personnage disparut. Depuis personne ne l'a revu. Mais un de ses confidents se trouva en possession de tous les papiers concernant l'héritage.

Ce n'est pas tout : dix-sept héritiers avaient déjà fondé, avec deux Américains, deux sociétés filiales de l' « Ottoman Impérial Estates Incorporated » de Richmond, U.S.A. à laquelle ils avaient transmis tous leurs droits à l'héritage du sultan.

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Les vingt-deux héritiers et le pacifiste américain

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On comprend que les vingt-deux héritiers d'Abdul Hamid ne se sentirent pas très rassurés quand ils virent qu'on partageait sans les consulter ce qu'ils estimaient être, en partie, leur héritage. Certains d'entre eux se mirent en rapport avec un très curieux homme : John de Kay, citoyen américain, auteur de livres pacifistes, et qui joua dans les coulisses des plus colossales entreprises financières du monde un étrange rôle de conseiller secret. M. John de Kay ne voyageait qu'en train spécial et traitait de pair à compagnon avec les diplomates de l'ancien et du nouveau monde. Les héritiers d'Abdul Hamid lui confièrent leurs intérêts. Tout allait bien quand, un beau jour, cet étrange personnage disparut. Depuis personne ne l'a revu. Mais un de ses confidents se trouva en possession de tous les papiers concernant l'héritage.

Ce n'est pas tout : dix-sept héritiers avaient déjà fondé, avec deux Américains, deux sociétés filiales de l' « Ottoman Imperial Estates Incorporated » de Richmond, U.S.A. à laquelle ils avaient transmis tous leurs droits à l'héritage du sultan.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

Le procès fera-t-il la lumière sur la disparition de l'énigmatique John de Kay et sur les tractations de son confident ?

Il va sans dire qu'autour des « ayants droit » sont venus s'agiter les plus fameux aventuriers du monde. Sur une plainte de la Société de Richmond U.S.A., la police fédérale suisse arrêta l'Allemand Deussen et le baron hongrois Lemheny qui se trouvaient en possession des contrats authentiques passés entre les dix-sept héritiers du sultan et la société de Richmond. Comment ces contrats étaient-ils entre leurs mains ? Nul ne le sut jamais. Le plus étonnant fut que ces deux personnages furent bientôt remis en liberté et partirent pour Paris.

Le droit des peuples…
le pétrole et la Banque de Montréal

Ce procès dure depuis 14 ans déjà et l'on espère que le tribunal de Zurich le réglera. Plusieurs des héritiers du Sultan rouge n'y sont plus qu'indirectement mêlés et n'y figureront guère que comme témoins. En effet, nous avons vu que dix-sept d'entre eux ont cédé leurs droits à l'Ottoman Impérial.

Mais cette société étant en déconfiture, il a fallu conclure un nouveau contrat avec une firme londonienne. Un autre groupe d'héritiers est représenté par un des plus puissants établissements financiers du Canada, la Banque de Montréal.

Il s'agit maintenant de savoir si les héritiers ont encore, du point de vue juridique, le moindre droit sur l'héritage du sultan si leurs représentants, certaines sociétés pétrolifères de l'Irak, par exemple, devront mettre les pouces.

Il s'agit de savoir si l'un des groupes ou des Etats intéressés aura le beau geste de renoncer à ses droits en faveur des infortunés héritiers en première et en seconde main du Sultan rouge. L'Angleterre ? l'Italie ?.

Mais si milliards de francs, c'est un joli cadeau ! Sans compter qu'il faudrait ajouter à cette somme les dividendes impayés, etc.

Depuis quatorze ans, les chancelleries de presque tous les pays du monde suivent patiemment l'évolution de cette ténébreuse affaire d'héritage. Il est probable qu'elles ne seraient pas fâchées de la voir enfin liquidée.

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GEORG (Manfred), « Les Huit Milliards d'Abd Ul Hamid (p.1). Huit nations se disputent les 8 milliards du "Sultan rouge" (p.3) », *Paris-soir*, Paris, édition 14 septembre 1937 (A15,N5191,ED6), sect. Dernières nouvelles, 14 septembre 1937. Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7643084k. Consulté le 27 janvier 2020, p. 1 et 3.

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1937-10-01 : Un procès perdu par le gouvernement de Palestine

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Il s'agit du procès intenté par les héritiers du sultan Abdul-Hamid en revendication des milliers d'hectares qui constituaient en Palestine une partie de l'immense fortune personnelle de l'ancien sultan. Pendant depuis dix-sept ans, le procès s'est terminé, le 18 novembre, par un jugement de la Cour de Jaffa, reconnaissant les titres de propriété des héritiers d'Abdul-Hamid et condamnant par surcroît le gouvernement palestinien aux frais de procédure. Naturellement, ce dernier fera appel de la sentence devant la Cour suprême de Jérusalem.

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COMPAGNIE DE JÉSUS, « Un procès perdu par le gouvernement de Palestine », *ÉTUDES, revue fondée en 1856 par des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 74e année, tome 233, Octobre-Novembre-Décembre 1937 (octobre 1937). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1138047. p. 815.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1937-11-19: Turkish Ruler's Heirs Win Title to Tract of Palestine Land in Vital Test Case

Turkish Ruler's Heirs Win Title to Tract of Palestine Land in Vital Test Case

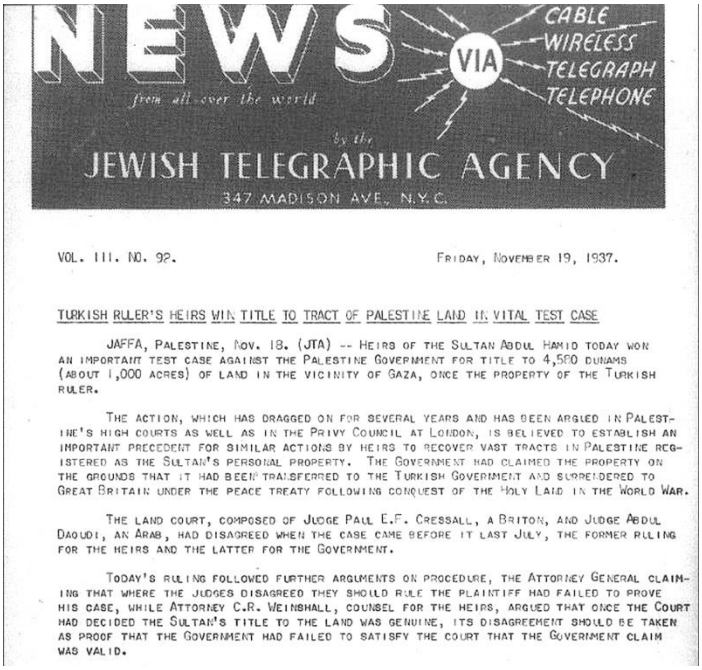
Friday, November 19, 1937

JAFFA, PALESTINE (Nov. 18) – Heirs of the Sultan Abdul Hamid Today won an important Test Case against the Palestine Government for title to 4,580 Dunams (about 1,000 Acres) of land in the vicinity of Gaza, once the property of the Turkish ruler.

The action, which has dragged on for several years and has been argued in Palestine's High Courts as well as in the Privy Council at London, is believed to establish an important precedent for similar actions by heirs to recover vast tracts in Palestine registered as the Sultan's personal property. The Government had claimed the property on the grounds that it had been transferred to the Turkish government and surrendered to Great Britain under the peace treaty following conquest of the Holy Land in the World War.

The Land Court, composed of Judge Paul E. F. Cressall, A. Briton, and Judge Abdul Daoudi, an Arab, had disagreed when the case came before it last July, the former ruling for the Heirs and the latter for the Government.

Today's ruling followed further arguments on procedure, the Attorney General claiming that where the judges disagreed they should rule the plaintiff had failed to prove his case, while attorney C. R. Weinshall, Counsel for the Heirs, argued that once the Court had decided the Sultan's Title to the Land was genuine, its disagreement should be taken as proof that the Government had failed to satisfy the Court that the Government claim was valid.



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VOL. III. NO. 92. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1937.

TURKISH RULER'S HEIRS WIN TITLE TO TRACT OF PALESTINE LAND IN VITAL TEST CASE

JAFFA, PALESTINE, NOV. 18. (JTA) -- HEIRS OF THE SULTAN ABDUL HAMID TODAY WON AN IMPORTANT TEST CASE AGAINST THE PALESTINE GOVERNMENT FOR TITLE TO 4,580 DUNAMS (ABOUT 1,000 ACRES) OF LAND IN THE VICINITY OF GAZA, ONCE THE PROPERTY OF THE TURKISH RULER.

THE ACTION, WHICH HAS DRAGGED ON FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND HAS BEEN ARGUED IN PALESTINE'S HIGH COURTS AS WELL AS IN THE PRIVY COUNCIL AT LONDON, IS BELIEVED TO ESTABLISH AN IMPORTANT PRECEDENT FOR SIMILAR ACTIONS BY HEIRS TO RECOVER VAST TRACTS IN PALESTINE REGISTERED AS THE SULTAN'S PERSONAL PROPERTY. THE GOVERNMENT HAD CLAIMED THE PROPERTY ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND SURRENDERED TO GREAT BRITAIN UNDER THE PEACE TREATY FOLLOWING CONQUEST OF THE HOLY LAND IN THE WORLD WAR.

THE LAND COURT, COMPOSED OF JUDGE PAUL E.F. CRESSALL, A BRITON, AND JUDGE ABDUL DAOUDI, AN ARAB, HAD DISAGREED WHEN THE CASE CAME BEFORE IT LAST JULY, THE FORMER RULING FOR THE HEIRS AND THE LATTER FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

TODAY'S RULING FOLLOWED FURTHER ARGUMENTS ON PROCEDURE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CLAIMING THAT WHERE THE JUDGES DISAGREED THEY SHOULD RULE THE PLAINTIFF HAD FAILED TO PROVE HIS CASE, WHILE ATTORNEY C.R. WEINSHALL, COUNSEL FOR THE HEIRS, ARGUED THAT ONCE THE COURT HAD DECIDED THE SULTAN'S TITLE TO THE LAND WAS GENUINE, ITS DISAGREEMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN AS PROOF THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD FAILED TO SATISFY THE COURT THAT THE GOVERNMENT CLAIM WAS VALID.

"Turkish Ruler's Heirs Win Title to Tract of Palestine Land in Vital Test Case". *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. New York, November 19, 1937. Vol. III, N°92. URL: http://archive.jta.org/1937/11/19/archive/turkish-rulers-heirs-win-title-to-tract-of-palestine-land-in-vital-test-case

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1937-11-20: Land Holdings in Palestine-Ownership May Be Affected

LAND HOLDINGS IN PALESTINE

OWNERSHIP MAY BE AFFECTED

JERUSALEM, Friday.

Ownership of 100,000 acres of land in Palestine may be affected by a judgment given in the District Court at Jaffa to-day.

The Court held that the Palestine Government had not established Its rights in land registered in the name of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey, which the Sultans heirs are claiming.

Previously the Court had decided that the onus of proof of possession rested on the Government which was treating the land involved in the case as Government property.

It comprises 1 500 acres near Gaza.

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"Land Holdings in Palestine-Ownership May Be Affected". *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), Saturday 20 November 1937, page 9. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11125943

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1938-01-01 : Etat successeur. — Biens du Sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid. — Transfert à l'Etat Ottoman par Iradeh. — Loi d'Etat. — Traité de Lausanne 1923, art. 60

État successeur. — Biens du Sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid. — Transfert à l'État Ottoman par Iradeh. — Loi d'État. — Traité de Lausanne 1923, art. 60.

Tribunal foncier de Jaffa, Palestine. — Héritiers du Prince Mahomed Selim c. Gouvernement de Palestine. — Octobre et Novembre 1937.

Les héritiers du Prince Mohammed Selim, fils du Sultan de Turquie Abdul Hamid II revendiquaient devant les tribunaux de Palestine des immeubles situés dans ce pays, enregistrés au Livre Foncier de Geza en 1886 au nom dudit Sultan et maintenus sous cette inscription. Le Sultan fut détrôné, et son successeur, Sultan Rashad, prit un Iradeh ou ordonnance Impériale transférant au Trésor Ottoman tous les biens acquis par Abdul Hamid et enregistrés à. son nom à partir d'une certaine date. En vertu de l'article 60 du Traité de Lausanne, tous les biens et possessions du gouvernement Ottoman situés sur le territoire détaché de l'Empire Ottoman par le traité, passent aux États successeurs. L'article proclame : « Il est entendu que les biens dont le transfert, de la Liste Civile à l'État résulte de certains Iradehs sont compris dans les biens désignés, les États susdits étant à leur égard subrogés à l'Empire Ottoman. » Les demandeurs soutenaient : 1. que les immeubles encore inscrits au Livre Foncier de Palestine au nom du Sultan ne constituaient pas des biens d'État transmis par le Traité au gouvernement de Palestine; 2. que l'Iradeh de 1909 ne fournissait de preuve suffisante permettant d'identifier les biens; 3. que les fermiers de feu le Sultan Abdul Hamid avait continué d'exploiter les biens sans le consentement du gouvernement qui n'avait rien fait pour les empêcher ; 4. que la subrogation du gouvernement de l'État aux droits de l'Empire Ottoman n'avait transmis à l'État successeur que la propriété des biens auxquels l'Empire avait un titre incontesté.

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ger, en première instance ou en appel. La Cour exprima des doutes sur le point de savoir si, alors même que la Cour d'appel siégerait en Palestine, elle serait une juridiction reconnue parce qu'il n'y avait pas de Cour d'Appel maronite siégeant en Palestine en 1922, date à laquelle l'Ordonnance en Conseil sur la Palestine vint confirmer la compétence des tribunaux religieux existant en Palestine sous le régime Turc.

Rapporté au « *Palestinian Post* », 22 juillet 1937.

Etat successeur. — Biens du Sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid. — Transfert à l'Etat Ottoman par Iradeh. — Loi d'Etat. — Traité de Lausanne 1923, art. 60.

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Le tribunal, composé de deux juges, était divisé. Le Juge britannique opérait pour les demandeurs. Le juge palestinien statua pour le gouvernement. À un stade ultérieur de la procédure, il fut jugé que la preuve du caractère non obligatoire de l'inscription au Registre Foncier incombait aux défendeurs et que, par conséquent, le jugement devait être pour les demandeurs.

CRESSOLL, J., dans son jugement, se refusa d'accepter une photocopie d'une prétendue traduction de l'Iradeh de 1909 conservée au Foreign Office de Londres en preuve de la liste des biens frappés par l'Iradeh. Il estima aussi que d'après la loi ottomane, le Sultan Abdul Hamid avait le droit de posséder des biens à titre privé aussi bien que comme chef de l'État. Alors que le Traité de Lausanne (mis en vigueur en Palestine par une Ordonnance du Gouvernement), étant l'exercice d'un pouvoir souverain, ne peut être contrôlé ou contrecarré par les tribunaux du pays, et en tant qu'il opérait « de facto » transmission des biens visés au Traité constituait un acte de gouvernement inattaquable en justice, néanmoins le tribunal devait examiner la portée de l'acte de gouvernement afin de délimiter son application (cf. Salomon c. Secretary of State for India, 1926, 1 K. B. 639). D'après la règle de droit international sur les droits de l'État successeur eu égard au domaine public est complète, mais n'entraîne pas une transmission des droits privés existant sur les biens, à moins qu'ils ne soient expressément éteints par le Traité lui-même ou par les actes ultérieurs du conquérant. Si le Traité de Lausanne avait contenu une clause attribuant à l'État successeur tous les biens inscrits au nom du Sultan Abdul Hamid, ou si l'on avait agi en conquérants par voie de saisie desdits bens, nul tribunal ne serait compétent pour examiner les prétentions d'un individu privé sur ces biens. Cependant, en l'espèce, il n'était pas prouvé que ces biens fussent transférés par l'Iradeh du gouvernement ottoman ou qu'ils fussent expressément compris dans les biens transmis aux États successeurs par le Traité de Lausanne.

Le juge arabe estimait que l'Iradeh de 1909 était suffisamment établi, car : 1° en dehors de la copie de la traduction, versée aux débats, il y fait allusion dans un Budget Ottoman, de 1910 et ailleurs; 2° l'Iradeh transmettait sans équivoque au Trésor Public les biens acquis par le Sultan après une certaine date; 3° l'Iradeh était un Acte de gouvernement exécuté et ne pouvait être contesté par le Tribunal ; 4° Le Traité de Lausanne, qui avait transmis au…

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NOTE. — Cette décision a une grande importance et sera sûrement déférée à une juridiction supérieure. C'est un procès de principe car les biens enregistrés au nom du Sultan Abdul Hamid comprennent de vastes territoires dans tous les États Ottomans : Palestine, Syrie, Grand Liban et Iraq.

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CLUNET (Édouard) et BENTWICH (Norman), « Etat successeur. — Biens du Sultan de Turquie, Abdul Hamid. — Transfert à l'Etat Ottoman par Iradeh. — Loi d'Etat. — Traité de Lausanne 1923, art. 60 », *Journal du droit international* / fondé en 1874 et publié par Édouard Clunet,..., 65e année, bimestriel, Janvier-Février (A65, T65), n° 1 (janvier 1938). Bibliothèque nationale de France Gallica. URL : https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5652854r. p. 939-941.

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1974: Heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid (International Law in Historical Perspective: State succession)

A typically traditional succession problem was laid before the courts still in the mandatory period. It concerned certain estates assertedly belonging in private ownership to the heirs of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II. See the case of the *Heirs of the Prince Mohamed Selim v. the Government of Palestine*, October-November 1937 (A.D. 1935-1937, Case No. 39): immovable properties, registered in the Land Books of Gaza in 1886 in the name of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and allowed to remain registered therein for the past 50 years as his private estate, despite his dethronement in 1908, the Iradeh of his successor Sultan Rashad of 7 May 1909, transferring all his properties from the Civil List to the Ottoman Treasury, and Art. 60 of the Peace Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. The two Judges in the Land Court of Jaffa, one British, the other Palestinian, were divided in opinion, the first being in favour of the Sultan's heirs.

The controversy was after various proceedings in Appellate Courts ultimately resolved by the Supreme Court of Palestine (sitting as Court of Civil Appeal) in a judgment of 31 May 1947 (A.D. 1947, Case No. 14) which turned on somewhat mysterious theories concerning "acts of State". The *Iradeh* of 1909 and a preceding *Iradeh* of 1908 were both held to be unconstitutional and invalid and not in themselves to come under the concept of an "act of State". The same applied to the subsequent validation or ratification of the 1909 *Iradeh* by virtue of the Ottoman Budget and Finance Laws. The Treaty of Lausanne, however, was an "act of State", the provisions of which could not be questioned by a Court in Palestine. The result of this reasoning was that the heirs of the Sultan were packed off because Art. 60 of the Treaty had made the, admittedly unconstitutional and invalid, *Iradeh*'s unassailable in a Palestinian Court by its juridical effect of "subrogating" Palestine to the Ottoman Empire.

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VERZIJL, J. H. W. « Heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid », in *International Law in Historical Perspective*: State succession, page 251. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1974.
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1939-05-16: Claim by Heirs of Prince. Slice of Palestine

CLAIM BY HEIRS OF PRINCE

Slice of Palestine

LONDON. May 15.-The Privy Council has granted leave to appeal in a claim which the appellants' counsel contended involved between one-sixth and one-third of Palestine.

The appellants, heirs of Prince Mohamad Selim, son of the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid (nicknamed the damned), claim land that their grandfather formerly owned at Gaza, which the Jaffa Land Court awarded to them.

Then the Palestine Government appealed to the Palestine Supreme Court, which directed a new trial. pointing out that the two judges of the Land Court differed on the merits of the case and should have called in a third judge to enable a majority judgment. The appellants' counsel submitted that the judges had no power to call in a third judge.

Counsel for the Palestine Governments contended that Sultan Mohammed Reshad, successor to Abdul Hamid, transferred the properties concerned to Turkey. Hence they were now the property of the Palestine Government by virtue of the Treaty of Lausanne.

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"Claim by Heirs of Prince. Slice of Palestine", *News* (Adelaide, SA : 1923 - 1954), Tuesday 16 May 1939, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article131939444

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1939-05-17: Abdul the Damned's Estate Claim by Heirs Goes to Privy Council

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The Privy Council held that the appeal referred only to the Supreme Court's decision, and it could not determine the merits of the case.

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"Abdul the Damned's Estate Claim by Heirs Goes to Privy Council London", *Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Wednesday 17 May 1939, page 20. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article30040535

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1940-06-27: Fifty Million Pounds. Where Is The Fortune Of Abdul Hamid

FIFTY MILLION POUNDS

Where Is the Fortune of Abdul Hamid?

By OSCAR RAY

A taxi drew up before No. 15 bis Tatra street, Budapest, and from it alighted a very distinguished, very beautiful woman with dark complexion and sad eyes, who was accompanied by a lovely young girl of about fourteen years of age. They hurried towards the door, for the woman observed that she had been recognised and that the curious had stopped to stare in front of the house.

"Poor Princess Mesiette!" said the good citizens of Budapest to each other, casting curious glances at the windows on the first floor of this modest house, where lived the daughter-in-law of Abdul Hamid, the Red Sultan, and her daughter.

When she fled from Constantinople and came to live in Budapest, the Hungarian Government gave her official papers recognising her as the wife of the Ottoman Prince Imperial, Abd-ul Kedir, heir to the throne of Turkey. The honors due to members of princely families were also accorded to her.

"Poor Princess Mesiette," said the people of Budapest. "How does she manage to live and to bring up her child, the only granddaughter of the Bed Sultan?"

One day, the son of the Red Sultan, Abd-ul Kedir, who lives in Paris and but rarely visits his wife and Princess Fatima, arrived unexpectedly in the Hungarian capital, and made an announcement through the press.

This declaration, sealed with the family seal of the Osman dynasty, informed the public of Budapest that the list of twenty heirs with a right to the fabulous inheritance of Abdul Hamid, the Red Sultan, did not include "a certain Madame Mesiette Fatima," nor her daughter, aged fourteen, known as Neslihsahe.

The Pretender to the Turkish throne went on to warn the unsuspecting Hungarian public that if credit were granted to this woman in spite of all the declarations, he, on his part, would repudiate all responsibility for debts so contracted.

And then Prince Osman's open letter went on: —

"I was fifteen years of age when, on the death of my father, Abdul Hamid, I married Madame Mesiette Fatima, who is of Greek origin… After the dissolution of our marriage this woman maintained no connection with the Osman family, and as a consequence has no claims on the estate of the Red Sultan."

"Poor ex-Princess Mesiette Fatima!" again said the people of Budapest, shaking their heads: "and so she will never see a penny of the Sultan's fortune…"

But why was it necessary to make this declaration? The answer is simply that until the time in question, people had always shrugged their shoulders on hearing any mention of this fabulous inheritance, and regarded the whole affair as a joke something like the great sea serpent or the Loch Ness monster.

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Now the sceptics had to keep quiet when a tribunal in Jaffa valued the compensation due to the heirs at fifty million pounds, for the different estates situated in Palestine.

Fifty million pounds sterling, only for the estates in Palestine! And this is only the least part of the Red Sultan's legacy, for many other estates had been confiscated previously. What then would be the aggregate amount of damages to recover?

"Poor Princess Meseitte," said the people of Budapest. "There she is cut off from participation in this inheritance. Never a penny will she get of the Red Sultan's millions..."

Red Sultan's Millions

What an utterly fantastic chapter in the history of the Osman dynasty!

One day a bodyguard, in single file, was seen carrying heavy cases reinforced with iron hoops from Yildiz Kiosque to an elegant yacht anchored in the Golden Horn.

At Yildiz Kiosque all had remained as the Red Sultan left it. The guard of honor wore the uniform of the regiment of the Ertroguli Guard: short breeches of red velvet, parti-colored silk tunic with gold facings, buckled shoes, powdered wig and tricorne hat. They stood gravely impassive, with the rigidity of those who are contemptuous or who fear, as if they dreaded the sudden appearance of the terrible Red Sultan.

For some years now Abdul Hamid had been in exile. Mohamed V., the new Sultan, had taken his place and the vast inheritance of the Red Sultan belonged to him. With remarkable prescience, the Sultan Mehmed had decided to carry off from the Palace at Yildiz the inestimable treasures of his predecessor.

The yacht which rode at anchor with the grace of a sea bird in the bay was the property of John de Kay, an American citizen who, as everyone knew, was the Sultan's closest friend. He was a man possessed of enormous wealth, and it was he who had placed his yacht at the disposal of his friend for the transport of the Red Sultan's treasures to America, where they would be safe.

This prudent decision of Sultan Mehmed proved a truly wise step. Hardly had John de Kay's yacht, bearing the treasure, sailed away when a tornado struck the members of the Osman family. Turkey had failed in the war on the side of the Central Powers; Kemal Pasha, who later came to be known as Ataturk, had taken in hand the destinies of his country and the strokes of Fate came with ever-increasing rapidity to buffet the members of the Osman family. Mehmed died, to be succeeded by his brother, Mehmed VI., but the new Sultan was so afraid for his life that he fled to Malta aboard a British ship and from there to France.

End Of A Dynasty

The Sultanate disappeared. The Osman dynasty, which had given to Turkey so many Sultans both great and bloody, had to be content with a Calif ate.

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The princes and princesses had just time to throw pellmell into a bag their immediate necessities. They had hardly time to collect a few jewels. The special train was ready to leave with all haste, and the air was heavy with dreadful tidings. It was said that any member of the Osman family who should be found on Turkish territory the next day would be held responsible for the crimes of the Red Sultan. The train drew out of the station and lost no time in proceeding on its journey.

The greater part of the fugitive princes found refuge in France. The Cote d'Azur was to some extent regarded as the official exile ground for the Osman family: it was there that Abdul Hamid, the Red Sultan himself, had lived his last days, and where Mehmed, his successor, had come for refuge.

The Osman princes arrived one after the other. Each brought with him practically nothing, but they knew full well that this was of very minor importance: anyhow, they were in 'no danger. They smiled disdainfully when they read that Kemal Pasha had organised an exhibition of jewels forgotten or left behind by the fleeing Osmans, before which the visitors stood dumbfounded with sheer amazement at their quantity and value.

The exiled princes could afford to laugh unconcernedly at this abandoned treasure, for they were thinking of the real treasure, the treasure which the far-sighted Mehmed, the last of the Sultans, had placed in security long, in advance, comprising thirty iron-bound chests the famous, incredible treasure stored away little by little by successive Sultans. This, the yacht of John de Kay had transported to America, where it was assuredly far from the clutching fingers of Kemal Ataturk.

Where Was John Kay?

But what was this John de Kay doing?

From what the princes knew of him he seemed to be a trustworthy man John de Kay — or to give him his correct name — John Kay, for the former was merely his nom-de-plume, had indeed produced several books of great interest on the controversial subject of international politics.

At the same time, this man was extremely rich, as the whole of America knew, since his fortune consisted of several million dollars, and he was the sole proprietor of an enterprise in Virginia with the name "Ottoman Imperial Estates Bank."

Still, this man continued to give no sign of life. Where could he be? Didn't he ever read the papers? Could he be unaware that the Osman princes had had to flee from Turkey? For weeks the papers had devoted much space to this.

Then where could this man be?

At first the Turkish, princes waited in a certain state of anxiety as day followed day without any word and then they decided that they would cable him. But still there was no sign of John Kay. And so the unfortunate princes were on the Riviera, the most beautiful refuge in the world, and they had no money…

It seemed that John Kay had decided not to reply to any cable.

Already, like sharks after the storm, the tradesmen, the moneylenders and others came to offer their services, proposing to buy from the princes their rights in the inheritance, naturally demanding fantastic interest.

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All the newspapers filled their columns with stories of the famous inheritance o: the Red Sultan— it was estimated at fabulous figures; in fact, in some cases the figure was quoted as high as many hundreds of milliards.

At that time the princes, who were extremely short of ready money, sold their rights to millions for a few thousand francs. They were compelled to pledge their last jewels. Eventually they decided to go to America and themselves find this famous John Kay, who in spite of his inexplicable behavior represented their only hope.

At their first meeting with this personage, who for them was quasi legendary, a terrible disillusionment was in store for them.

The author - banker listened patiently right to the end, while the representative of the Osman princes recalled the treasure packed in thirty iron-bound chests and loaded one evening on his yacht. When they had finished he replied more or less as follows; —

"Your Highnesses. I am desolated to have to disillusion you as regards your seductive dream, but the Sultan Mehmed V, who is now dead, and who was indeed a most excellent friend of mine, never entrusted to me any treasure…"

"But what about the thirty cases?"

The American smiled discreetly.

"Ah, those; they contained certain material which was compromising for the Osman family, and at the express wish of my friend the Sultan I threw them into the sea."

"Then there's no connection between the Osman fortune and the Ottoman Bank?"

"No." said John Kay. "That's an entirely different proposition. As I have already told you, the late Sultan was an excellent friend of mine. I had bought from him some oil concessions at Iran, and those are the concessions on which my bank is established."

Completely bewildered, the heirs returned to Europe not knowing what to do, and finally decided among themselves to deliver John Kay up to Justice.

It is very easy to say that you are going to deliver someone up to justice. How could the poor princes, exiled and denuded of all financial resources, take up the struggle with the millionaire American banker in the field of litigation? John Kay, they said, had taken away from Yildiz Kiosque a fabulous treasure, packed in thirty iron-bound cases. But how to prove it.

Was it really possible to base a legal action on such an accusation which seemed more appropriate to the stories of the thousand and one nights.

On the other hand, another difficulty arose immediately there was any question of taking even the slightest action; the princes living in exile numbered about twenty, all of whom had exactly the same title as heirs; other could not fail to complicate the official acts. Moreover, when the question arose of representing the interests by choosing an advocate (this was the ex-President of the French Republic, Millerand), several of the princes drew out at the last moment.

Kay's Clever Move

What then happened?

John Kay, as a practical American business man, went back to his yacht, and simply came to interview each of his adversaries, one after the other,

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"Your Highness. I am fully aware that at the moment you are absolutely lacking in funds. I have no doubt that the fortune will be found; what is your figure for assigning to me, or, more properly speaking, to my bank, your interest in it?"

And the princes on the verge, so to speak, of starvation, could not resist the golden prospect of some thousands of dollars, John Kay indefatigably went from one prince to another, and succeeded in keeping them quiet, one for 10,000 dollars, another for 15,000 dollars, and another for 20,000 dollars, and when it came to a question of calculating the shares, it was ascertained that some of the heirs had assigned their portion absolutely, and were entirely stripped of all their rights, in favor, ironically enough, of their adversary. John Kay, therefore, became co-heir with his adversaries; it is highly improbable that at least from his side the contract against himself would be likely to proceed.

It was also seen among other things that the claimant to the throne, the son of Abdul -Hamid. Prince Abd-ul Kadir, had received from the American on one occasion 2,000 dollars, and on a second 20,000.

At this time the stock of the Red Sultan's inheritance had fallen to zero. How then could legal action be taken of such a nature without any chance of success, since the majority of those interested had withdrawn their claims? It was obvious that the clever American had placed his hands surely and incontrovertibly on the fantastic treasure of Abdul Hamid, and that he would not let go.

When all hoped this sum would be lost, there happened a dramatic incident. The representative of a very powerful American bank found the heirs, and made to them an incredible proposition.

Counter-Stroke Planned

"The bank which I represent is ready to support the Prince of the Osman family" and to take action against John Kay, or, rather, against his bank, and to offer you some advance. There is, however, one condition: We will not represent twenty heirs; we cannot be continually conferring with twenty people. It is with the Osman family, or, rather, with the Osman dynasty, that we will negotiate. Appoint a head of the family, and we will get into contact with him directly."

It was an important question, and in order to solve it there was almost another lawsuit among the princes of the family. Who, indeed, was the head of the dynasty? Was it the claimant to the throne, Abd-ul Kadir, or Prince Abdul Medgid, the last Calif restored to his dignity by the last Sultan Mehmed V, before his departure?

However, the decision had to be made, the close mirage of the money to be regained contributing greatly towards an agreement, and the twenty heirs swore fidelity to each other with great pomp and also to the ex-Calif Abdul Medgid, who at the time was living in Zurich. They recognised him as head of the Osman family, and gave him full powers to lead the campaign against their enemy.

Nevertheless the Prince was only the Honorary Chief of operations directed by the American bank, and hostilities commenced in such favorable auspices that John Kay, multimillionaire, disappeared from Virginia.

his adversaries, one after the other, and spoke to them somewhat as follows:—

"Your Highness. I am fully aware that at the moment you are absolutely lacking in funds. I have no doubt that the fortune will be found; what is your figure for assigning to me, or, more properly speaking, to my bank, your interest in it?"

And the princes on the verge, so to speak, of starvation, could not resist the golden prospect of some thousands of dollars, John Kay indefatigably went from one prince to another, and succeeded in keeping them quiet, one for 10,000 dollars, another for 15,000 dollars, and another for 20,000 dollars, and when it came to a question of calculating the shares, it was ascertained that some of the heirs had assigned their portion absolutely, and were entirely stripped of all their rights, in favor, ironically enough, of their adversary. John Kay, therefore, became co-heir with his adversaries; it is highly improbable that at least from his side the contract against himself would be likely to proceed.

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What had become of him nobody knew.

According to some, John Kay, with his already considerable fortune, suddenly became disgusted with this struggle against the heirs of Abdul Hamid, especially when they were backed by a very powerful bank.

He simply collected all his money, and with his box full quietly left his bank in order to live a tranquil life of affluence somewhere else. Others endeavored to explain his disappearance as a result of the American lawsuit.

However this may be, the fact remains that one fine day the doors of John Kay's bank in Virginia were not opened at the usual time. At the request of the American bank the American authorities found themselves compelled to demand admittance and to compile an inventory from the papers which they found there.

Abdul Hamid's Wealth

The results of this perquisition were truly sensational, for from the documents discovered the authorities were able to establish incontestably that John Kay had received unheaxd-of treasures from the Osman family as a deposit, and that he had appropriated them to his own purposes. But it was also discovered that the thirty ironbound cases of which John Kay had taken possession, and which had completely disappeared, were nothing but an insignificant part of Abdul Hamid's fortune.

The real legacy of the Red Sultan did not consist of gold or jewels, but in real-estate titles lost in some incomprehensible manner in John Kay's strongrooms. The state of these documents revealed that Abdul Hamid was one of the richest men in the world. . From Albania to Persia, and the territory of the States which succeeded Turkey, he was a proprietor of enormous estates, mines, oil wells, railways, buildings and dwelling houses. With incredible lucidity Abdul Hamid had been able to place in his own name, with all the requisite legal formalities, every single natural treasure which existed in his kingdom.

Although Ataturk had manipulated the vote for the exclusion from the throne of the Osman family, although he had confiscated all their property on Turkish territory, and although John Kay had disappeared with the thirty cases containing gold and jewels amassed by successive Sultans, the legacy of Abdul Hamid still constituted an inestimable fortune of estates, mines, oil wells, railways, &c, in the Near East.

So the lawsuit supported by the American Lank began. It began against the plaintiff successors who claimed to be the legal heirs of the Red Sultan. The case was pleaded in Palestine, in Egypt, and in Syria, in Transjordania, in Mesopotamia, and elsewhere. It was the greatest lawsuit in history. The finest counsel were briefed, and exhorbitant fees were demanded. The first part of the lawsuit came to hand, and the Jaffa Court decided that as regards the goods situated in Palestine among others an estate of 125,000 hectares constituted a charge for which the Government would pay Abdul Hamid's heirs £50,000,000.

Thus the heirs of Abdul Hamid won the first round of the great struggle.

Calif's New Move

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The heirs— who were living all over Europe— hastened to Zurich, where the last Cali had elected to live.

He announced to his co-heirs that he considered himself as head of the family, and in accordance with the traditional custom of the Osman family, sole heir to the inheritance and, as such, intended to take possession of the entire estate and to place it in the bank in his own name, making monthly allowances to all the other members of the family as heretofore, by order of Abdul Hamid during his lifetime.

Of the twenty heirs, four accepted this project almost without objection; all the others instituted new legal proceedings against the Calif. This action was brought before the tribunal at Nice, in a curious manner.

The princes asked the Court to order the ex-Calif to give an account of the money he had already received: as a matter of fact, he had already made certain agreements with some of the successor states. Chiefly, the heirs knew that Abdul Medgid had obtained considerable sums in connection with the concessions relating to oil deposits in the name of the Osman family. The heirs claimed that the Court should compel the Calif to disclose all the contracts he had signed in their name, and that he should share among them the money he had been able to collect from this source.

Judge Lajus was President cf the first Court at Nice where this action was heard.

The representatives of the Calif arrived at Court smiling and very sure of themselves, their defence prepared to perfection.

"The members of the Osman family have recognised the Calif as their head; what he decides or does is based on the laws of the Osman family which has given him full authority to act.

"In the Osman family, the head of the family makes all decisions, and no one has the right to criticise or even less to question his actions… Thus it is incomprehensible that the members of the Osman family should have instituted these proceedings."

Jaffa Judgment Reversed

With this general share-out in prospect, the matter of the succession to the legacy of the Red Sultan seemed to be taking a dangerous turn.

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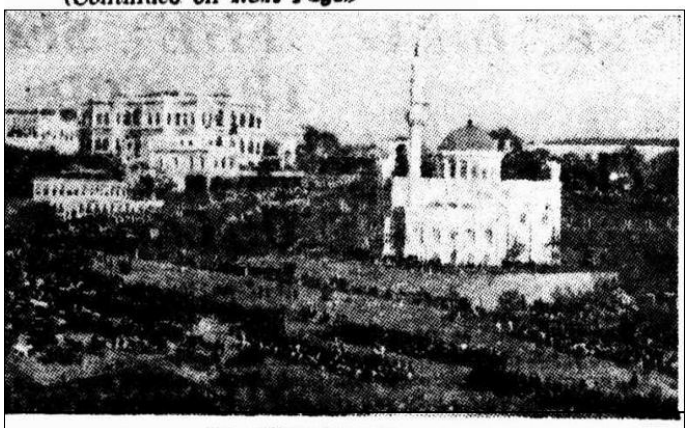
(Continued on Next Page.)



The Yildiz Kiosque

FIFTY MILLION POUNDS

(Continued from Previous Page).

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But the lawsuit at Nice was not yet finished when a very important reversal of judgment was made.

The Court of Appeal in Jerusalem, in one of its last sessions, examined the judgment given by the Jaffa tribunal which, as we have stated, estimated the damages due to Abdul Hamid's heirs for the Palestine estates at fifty million pounds.

The plea of the Jaffa Court was thus criticised by the Court of Appeal: —

"The plea of the heirs of Abdul Hamid alleged that the estates in the vicinity of Gaza were the personal property of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, and therefore could not become the property of the Palestine Government by virtue of the Accord of Sevres. The Jaffa tribunal accepted this plea and ruled that the Government should pay to the heirs of Abdul Hamid the sum of fifty million pounds. The Court of Appeal of Jerusalem, having examined the case of the defendants, quashes this judgment against the Government of Palestine and rules that the claim of the heirs of Abdul Hamid is inadmissable."

Such a decision was not only unfavorable to the heirs of the Sultan, it was a veritable catastrophe, for it created a precedent which would carry extraordinary weight in all other actions of a similar nature against the other successor states of Turkey.

Did this signify that all other proceedings would be ruined? Would the greatest lawsuit the world had ever known end in such a distressing conclusion? Certainly, the estate in Palestine, comprising 135,000 hectares and valued at fifty million pounds, was only one of many similar assets in Mesopotamia, Syria, Trans-Jordania, etc., but in consideration of the decision of the Jerusalem Court, the outcome of the other actions seemed to be very doubtful.

Perhaps the proceedings of this world-wide, gigantic lawsuit were nowhere followed with, so much attention as in Budapest, owing to the personality of Princess Mesiette Fatima, who was staying in the Hungarian capital and whom the Red Sultan's son had excluded from the inheritance just when everyone thought that the money would be forthcoming a few weeks later.

Since this blow, the Princess lived more modestly, more sadly than ever, leading an even more retired life than heretofore.

On the occasion of the Jerusalem Court's decision, a journalist interviewed her and tried to console her with the thought that even if she had been excluded. Fate had just punished the perpetrator of this unchivalrous act in a most unexpected manner, by bringing a rude awakening to the great dream.

"No, no," replied the Princess quickly, "this is no consolation to me. Here is my consolation..."

And the beautiful Mesiette Fatima drew to her the pretty little girl Neslishahe, the granddaughter of Abdul Hamid... This child, aged fourteen, then living in Budapest, bore a resemblance to her grandfather that was really striking.

"And this resemblance does not stop at the mere physical likeness," continued the mother. "Despite the fact that she was born far from her fatherland, she displays to a marked degree the spirit of her famous ancestor.

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Even when a little girl, she showed how her heart was wrapped up in Turkey, for when her governess was teaching her about the war between Hungary and Turkey, she was thrilled, and if her teacher failed to take the Turkish point of view, would correct her and defend the invading Sultans with eyes aflame."

The sons of Abdul Hamid came to blows over the inheritance of the Red Sultan, which eventually seemed to deteriorate into a fata morgana, a castle in Spain; his little granddaughter was leading the life of a simple Hungarian bourgeoise, almost in poverty. What would the famous Sultan have said had he been able to return for one short moment from the grave, he who during his lifetime had amassed incalculable treasures, if he could have witnessed what happened after his death?

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RAY (Oscar). "FIFTY MILLION POUNDS - Where Is The Fortune Of Abdul Hamid?", *Adelaide Chronicle*, (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954), Thursday 27 June 1940, page 41. National Library of Australia. Source: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92394344

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1945-08-20: Legal Struggle For Huge Fortune

LEGAL STRUGGLE FOR HUGE FORTUNE

LONDON. — The most spectacular lawsuit ever launched —a fight for the £100,000,000 estates of Ottoman ruler "Abdul the Damned" will reopen soon in Jaffa (Palestine).

"Abdul the Damned" was Sultan Abdul Hamid, of Turkey, who was deposed in 1909 and died nine years-later in prison, in Asia Minor. During his long reign he acquired vast estates in Greece, Macedonia, Syria, Palestine, and elsewhere.

They were valued at £300,000,000 making Abdul the world's richest man.

It was said he had no fewer than 237 wives.

Abdul's properties lay in territories ceded by Turkey in 1924 under the Treaty of Lausanne.

COMPANIES FORMED

A claim was made in the land court at Jaffa some years, ago to establish the rights of heirs, arid a decision was given for the heirs.

Two companies — the first in Palestine and the second in other territories — have been formed to back the heirs' claims.

They were registered in Canada, and each has capital of £1,500,000 of which half has been allocated by the heirs.

The rest of the capital has been put in by London and other businessmen, who hope as a result to be blessed by a goodly portion of the fabulous wealth of "Abdul the Damned?"

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"Legal Struggle For Huge Fortune", *Evening Advocate* (Innisfail, Qld. : 1941 - 1954), Monday 20 August 1945, page 2. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article212285724

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1945-12-04: Renewed Fight For Fortune Of "Abdul The Damned"

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From Our Staff Correspondent .

LONDON, Dec. 3.-After 25 years of legal wrangling, the hearing will be reopened in Jerusalem to-day of a claim for ownershiprich estates in Palestine formerly owned by Abdul Hamid ("Abdul the Damned"), Sultan of Turkey.

Shortly after Abdul's death in 1918, many territories in which his estates were located were ceded by Turkey under the Treaty of Lausanne. When widespread Palestine possessions passed to the British Government under the terms of the mandate, Abdul's heirs staked a claim, but lost on a legal technicality.

Principal claimants are nine grand-children-four sons and five daughters of the late Prince Selim, who was Abdul's son. In their latest legal fight they are backed by two British companies with a capital of £2,000,000. These companies are I financing the proceedings on the basis of a 50-50 share of any sums the heirs may be awarded.

If Abdul's descendants win back the Palestine estates the legal struggle will move to Turkey, where the bulk of the Sultan's fortune remains.

When Abdul (known as "Abdul the Damned" because of his part in the Armenian massacres in the last century) was dragged from his palace to die in prison, he left about £200 million to be divided among his four wives, 200 concubines, and their descendants. In the past 25 years his heirs have spent £300,000 in taking their claims to the highest Courts. Now the Privy Council has decided that the case should be re-opened.

Abdul kept the largest harem on record, and when he tired of women he had them murdered and their bodies thrown in sacks into the Bosphorus. A collection of emeralds, ropes of pearls, and rubies of tremendous size in one room of his Istanbul palace was valued, for insurance purposes, at £28,000,000.

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"Renewed Fight For Fortune Of "Abdul The Damned"", *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 4 December 1945, page 3. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article27923345

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1945-12-04: Fight For Fortune. Sultan's Great Wealth

FIGHT FOR FORTUNE

Sultan's Great Wealth

“The Age” Special Correspondent

LONDON. Dec. 3.

When Abdul Hamid. "Abdul the Damned”, a Turkish Sultan, was dragged from a luxury palace to die in prison, he left behind a muddle of fantastic wealth — about £200.000.000— to be divided between his four wives and 200 concubines and their descendants. In the past 25 years the heirs have spent £300.000 In taking unsuccessful legal arguments to the highest courts, and now the British Privy Council has decided that the case should be retried.

The hearing will reopen in Jerusalem today and this time the heirs are backed by two British companies with a capital of £2.000.000 who are financing the proceedings on the basis of a 50-50 share with the heirs of any sums they may be awarded.

The principal claimants are four sons and five daughters of the late Prince Selim, who was Abdul’s son. Shortly after Abdul's death many territories in which his rich estates are located were ceded by Turkey under the Lausanne treaty. When widespread Palestine possessions passed to the British Government under the mandate terms, the heirs immediately staked their claim, but lost on a legal technicality.

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“Fight For Fortune. Sultan's Great Wealth”, *Age* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1854 - 1954), Tuesday 4 December 1945, page 3. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205648790

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1945-12-12: Palestine Sees A New Crusade

PALESTINE SEES A NEW CRUSADE

CAIRO, December 11 (Special):
In Jerusalem, "Abdul the Damned" has started the Eighth Crusade.

For more than 15 years, the heirs of Abdul Hamid, "the Red Fox," second Sultan of Ottoman, Caliph of Islam, in his time the most celebrated man in Europe, have fought in every court available for his fortune of £300,000,000.

Called (by his friends) "the Magnificent," Abdul had for 35 years ruled his empire brutally from the seclusion of a fantastic seraglio in Constantinople's Yeldiz Palace.

When he died in a Syrian prison in 1918, he left behind a tottering throne, nine widows, 200 or so concubines, countless children, and — what was more to the point — the richest piece of litigious cake ever to fall into the lap of international lawyers.

Law courts of Europe had wearied of hearing about Abdul! his heirs — principally four or five sons and daughters of his son Prince Selim — had sent judges to sleep in their fight for the fortune.

Now, in Jerusalem's Christian Supreme Court, the old Saracens are fighting again.

The heirs are one step nearer success— the Jaffa Land Court has given permission for Abdul's heirs to go ahead with a test case they were bringing against the Mandatory Power about the ownership of a small piece of land near Gaza.

If the test case results in their favour, they will flood the courts with thousands of other cases covering land acreage, measuring roughly one seventh of the total area of Palestine.

But the heirs are spending money. The Gaza case has been going on since 1937, when the court held that the onus lay on the Government of Palestine to prove the state of ownership.

A number of appeals, counter-appeals, resulted, until the war intervened, stopped the litigation.

With the decision of the Jaffa Land Court, the heirs feel the huge fortune (less what international lawyers have taken) is within their grasp.

If they win, huge tracts of Palestine will be handed over to them.

To Britain, France, "Abdul the Damned" has handed a posthumous headache.

The litigation has introduced a subsidiary factor into the already extremely complicated fabric of Palestinian politics.

Indications are that Britain and France will continue the lawsuit in Turkey.

International gamblers are offering odds on their success: hard-headed British, French, even Yankee businessmen, with £2,000,000 behind them, are prepared to pay legal costs.

For a £300,000,000 stake, it seems little enough— but it is a lot to the heirs of "Abdul the Damned."

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"Palestine Sees A New Crusade", *Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Qld. : 1907 - 1954), Wednesday 12 December 1945, page 3. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article62866921

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1945-12-16: Abdul's heirs asked for £ 100-million

MIDDLE EAST

Abdul's heirs asked for £ 100-million

FACT'S London News Bureau

Headaches on the Palestine situation were not confined to Zionists, Arabs and Anglo-American policymakers. On tenterhooks for 25 years were many people with Middle East business connections.

They were waiting the outcome of a Jerusalem land court case involving estates of £100,000,000, including one-seventh of Palestine, 3,000,000 acres in Syria and the Mosul oilfields.

Originally the property of Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey (Abdul the Damned), who was deposed in 1909 and died in prison in 1918, it lay in territory ceded by Turkey under the Lausanne Treaty of 1923.

The heirs claimed it was still theirs and two of them sued the Palestine Government for possession of a village near Gaza.

Litigation had already cost £500,000. The Turkish courts decided for the heirs in 1922 and compensated them for properties in Turkey. The Jaffa land court in 1937 also upheld the heirs, but the Privy Council in London ordered a re-trial, which has now begun.

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"Abdul's heirs asked for £ 100-million", *Sun* (Sydney, NSW : 1910 - 1954), Sunday 16 December 1945, page 2. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article229025252

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-11: Renewed Fight For Fortune Of Abdul The Damned

RENEWED FIGHT FOR FORTUNE OF "ABDUL THE DAMNED"

After 25 years of legal wrangling, the hearing was reopened in Jerusalem on Monday for a claim for ownership of rich estates in Palestine formerly owned by Abdul Hamid ("Abdul-the Damned"); Sultan of Turkey.

Shortly after Abdul's death in 1918 many territories in which his estates were located were ceded by Turkey under the Treaty of Lausanne. When widespread Palestine possessions passed to the British Government under the terms of the mandate. Abdul's heirs staked a claim, but lost on a legal technically.

Principal claimants are nine grandchildren — four sons and five daughters of the late Prince Selim, who was Abdul's son. In their latest legal fight they are backed by two British companies with a capital of about £2,000 000. These companies are financing the proceedings on the basis of a 50-50 share of any sums the heirs may be awarded.

If Abdul's descendants win back the Palestine estates the legal struggle will move to Turkey, where the bulk of the Sultan fortune remains.

When Abdul (known as "Abdul the Damned" because of his part in the Armenian massacres in the last century) was dragged from his palace to die in prison, he left about £200 million to be divided among his four wives, 200 concubines, and their descendants. In the past 25 years his heirs have spent £300,000 in taking (heir claims to the highest courts. Now the Privy Council has decided (hat the case should be reopened.

Abdul kept the largest harem on record, and when he tired of women he hail them murdered and their bodies thrown in sacks into the Bosphorus. A collection of emeralds, ropes of pearls, and rubies of tremendous size in one room of his Istanbul palace was valued, for insurance purposes, at £28,000,000.

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"Renewed Fight For Fortune Of Abdul The Damned", *Narandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser* (NSW : 1893 - 1953), Friday 11 January 1946, page 2. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article101439271

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-18: Test Claim By Sultan's Heir

Test Claim By Sultan's Heir

LONDON, Fri — An action by Princess Amina Nemeka, granddaughter of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey (known as "Abdul the Damned") against the Palestine Government, claiming 1000 acres of land in Palestine from a part of the Sultan's vast estates was dismissed by the President of the District Court, says Reuters man at Jerusalem.

Judgment, which took 75 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government had legally inherited Turkish State lands under the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

Correspondent adds that the action is a test case and is regarded as a prelude to litigation by Abdul Hamid's heirs involving 12,000,000 acres of land in the former Ottoman Empire.

It is understood that the heirs will how appeal to the Supreme Court.

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"Test Claim By Sultan's Heir", *Daily News* (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1950), Friday 18 January 1946, page 8. National Library of Australia.
URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article78825268

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Big Land Claim Dismissed. Link With Estates Of “Abdul The Damned”

BIG LAND CLAIM DISMISSED

Link With Estates Of "Abdul The Damned"

LONDON, Jan. 18.—AAP

An action by Princess Amina Nemeka, granddaughter of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid. known as "Abdul the Damned," against the

Government of Palestine claiming 1.000 acres of land in Palestine as part of the Sultan's vast estates has been dismissed by the president of the District Court, says Reuters Jerusalem correspondent.

The judgment, which took 75 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government had legally inherited Turkish State lands under the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

The action, says the correspondent, was a test case, and was regarded as the prelude to litigation, by Abdul Hamid's heirs involving 12 million acres of land in the former Ottoman Empire. It is understood that the heirs will now appeal to the Supreme Court.

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“Big Land Claim Dismissed. Link With Estates Of ‘Abdul The Damned’”, *Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 12. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article48687375

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Estate Of Abdul The Damned Mentioned In Claim

Estate Of "Abdul The Damned" Mentioned In Claim

LONDON, January 17.- An action by Princess Amina Nemeka, grand-daughter of the late. Sultan, Abdul Hamid, known as "Abdul the Damned," against the Palestine Government, claiming 1000 acres of land in Palestine from part of the Sultan's vast estates was dismissed by the President of the District Court, says Reuter's Jerusalem correspondent.

The judgement, which took 75 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government legally inherited Turkish State land under the Treaty of Lausanne, 1923.

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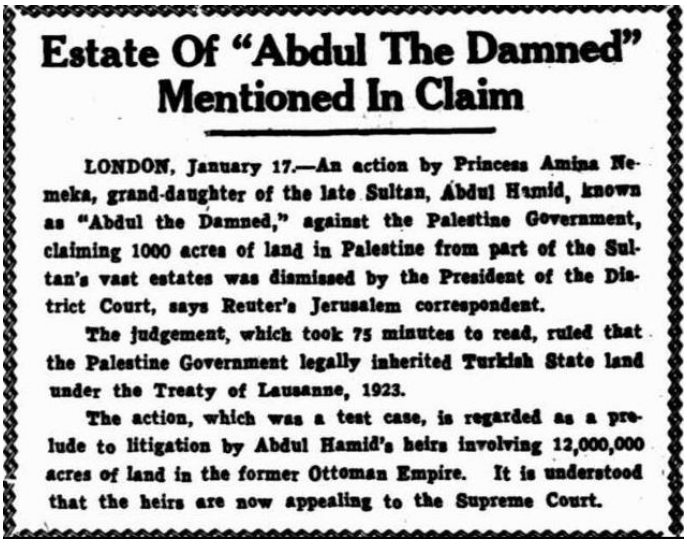

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"Estate Of "Abdul The Damned" Mentioned In Claim", *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton, Qld. : 1878 - 1954), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 5. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56431732

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Princess Fails In Claim

PRINCESS FAILS IN CLAIM

LONDON, Jan. IS (A.A.P.).

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He says that the judgment, which took an hour and 15 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government legally inherited Turkish State lands under the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

The action was a test case, and was regarded as a prelude to litigation by Abdul Hamid's heirs, involving 12 million acres in the former Ottoman Empire.

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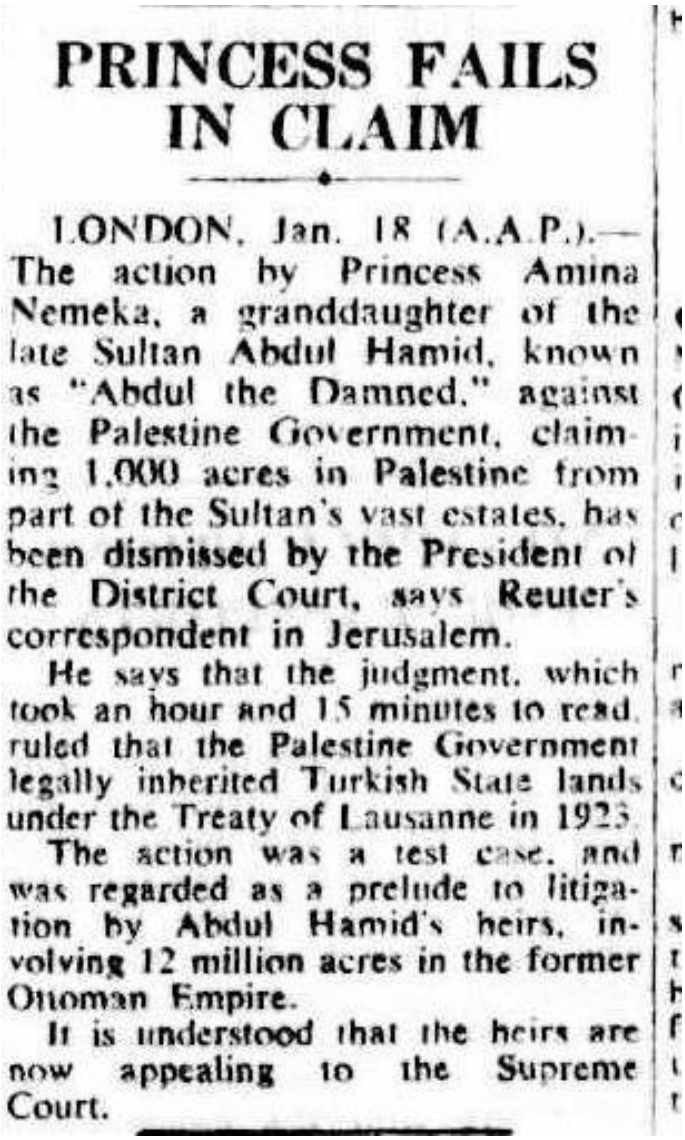

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It is understood that the heirs are now appealing to the Supreme Court.

"Princess Fails In Claim", *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 3. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article27916187

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Princess Loses Claim For Land

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The judgment, which took 75 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government had legally inherited Turkish State lands under the Treaty of Lausanne, 1923.

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"Princess Loses Claim For Land", *Tweed Daily* (Murwillumbah, NSW : 1914 - 1949), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 1. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article193035070

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Royal Estate Jerusalem Claim

ROYAL ESTATE

Jerusalem Claim

LONDON, January 17. — The action by Princess Amlna Nemeka, granddaughter of the late Sultan, Abdul Hamid, known as "Abdul the Damned," against the Palestine Government claiming 1000 acres of land In Palestine from part of the Sultan's vast estates, was dismissed by the president of the District Court, says Reuter's Jerusalem correspondent.

The judgment, which took 75 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government legally inherited Turkish State lands under the Treaty of Lausanne In 1923.

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"Royal Estate. Jerusalem Claim", *Daily Mercury* (Mackay, Qld. : 1906 - 1954), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171130956

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Sultan's Estate Land In Palestine Grand-Daughter's Claim Dismissed

Sultan's Estate

LAND IN PALESTINE

GRAND-DAUGHTER'S CLAIM DISMISSED

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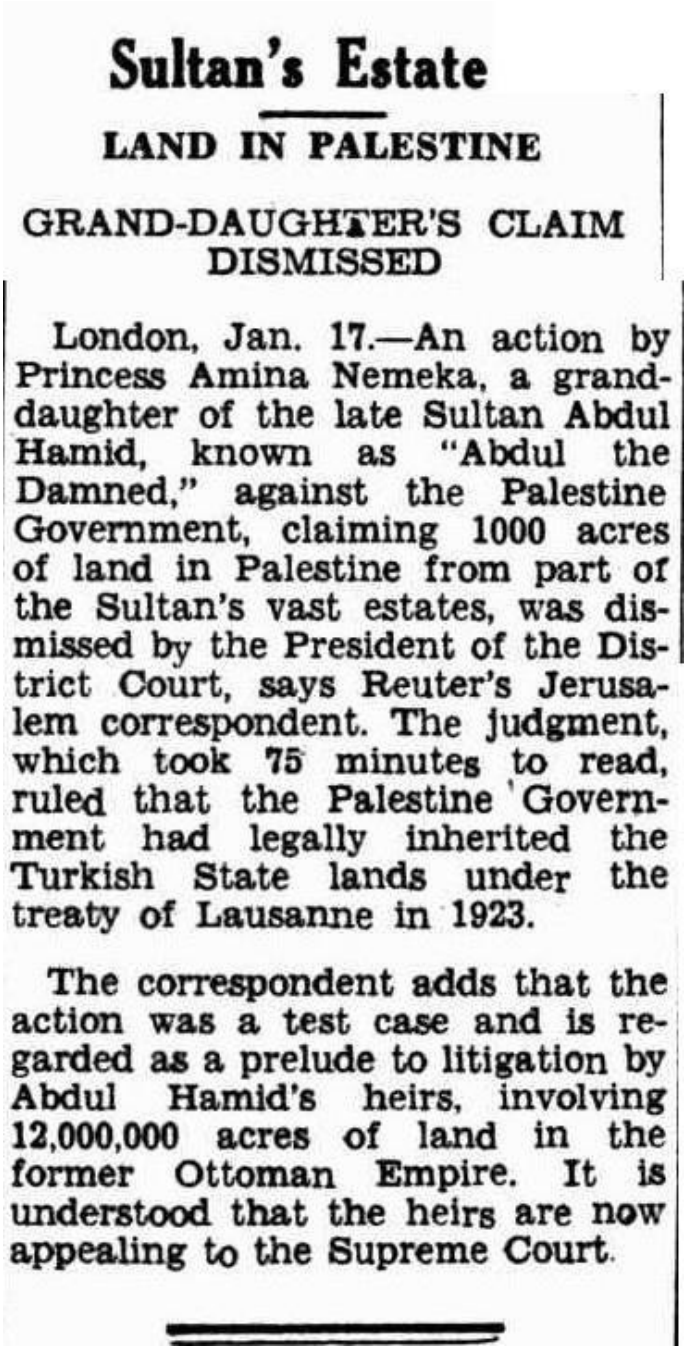

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The correspondent adds that the action was a test case and is regarded as a prelude to litigation by Abdul Hamid's heirs, involving 12,000,000 acres of land in the former Ottoman Empire. It is understood that the heirs are now appealing to the Supreme Court.

"Sultan's Estate Land In Palestine Grand-Daughter's Claim Dismissed", *Kalgoorlie Miner* (WA : 1895 - 1954), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 5. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article95575786

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-19: Princess Loses Claim For Land

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"Princess Loses Claim For Land", *Tweed Daily* (Murwillumbah, NSW : 1914 - 1949), Saturday 19 January 1946, page 1. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article193035070

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-21: Sultan's Heiress Loses Case

SULTAN'S HEIRESS LOSES CASE

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The judgment, which took 75 minutes to read, ruled that the Palestine Government legally inherited Turkish State lands under the Treaty of Lausanne, 1923.

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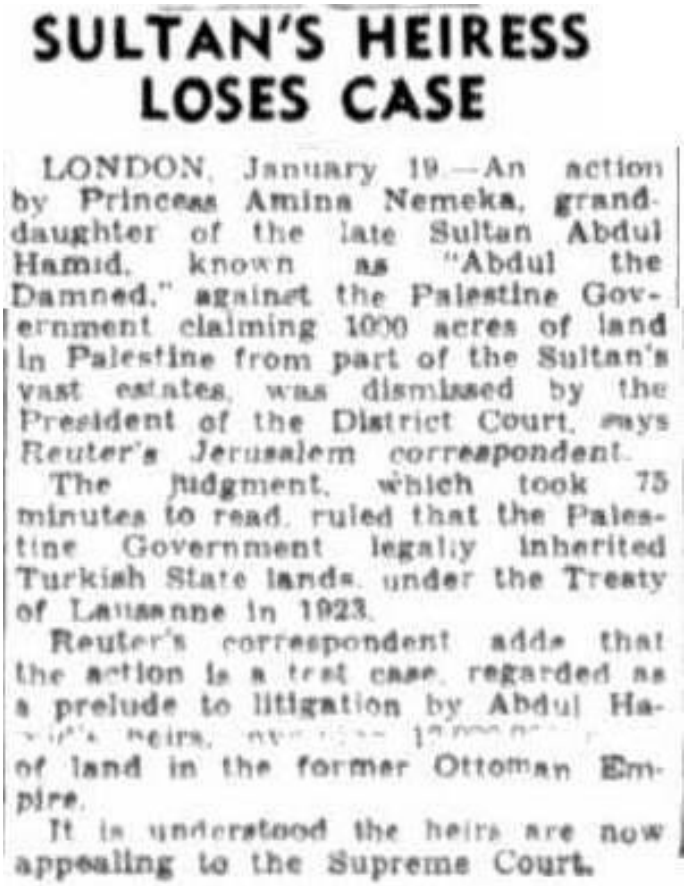

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It is understood the heirs are now appealing to the Supreme Court.

"Sultan's Heiress Loses Case", *Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Qld. : 1907 - 1954), Monday 21 January 1946, page 2. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article62866997

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-01-22: Claim Fails

CLAIM FAILS

LONDON, January 19--An action by Princess Amina Nemeka. granddaughter of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid, known as "Abdul the Damned," against, the Palestine Government claiming 1000 acres of land in Palestine from part of the Sultan's vast estates, was dismissed by the President of the District Court, says Reuter's Jerusalem correspondent.

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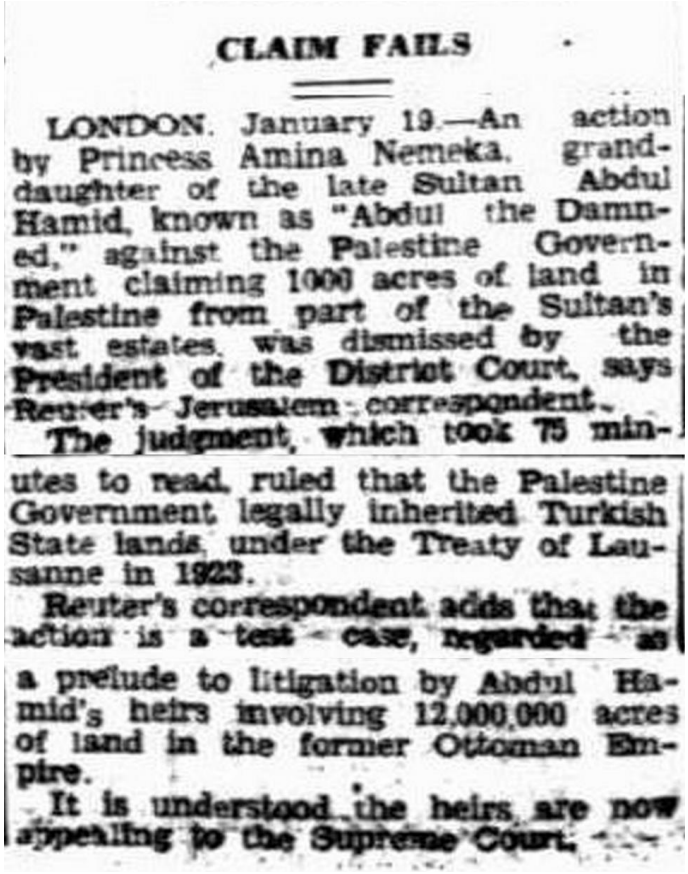

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"Claim Fails", *Northern Miner* (Charters Towers, Qld. : 1874 - 1954), Tuesday 22 January 1946, page 2. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article81431197

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

1946-06-08: They Had Good Reason To Call Him “Abdul The Damned”

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By A Special Correspondent

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This much is certain! Records found at the time Abdul was tossed out in 1909 put the total number of women in his household at 400. But, by count, only 200 were there.

After his death lawyers began a world-wide hunt for missing heirs. Some genuine ones fled for their lives, convinced that the searchers were assassins in disguise. One son, Prince Abdul Kadir, was found in Vienna, where he had just been fired from his six-shilling-a-day Job as fiddler in a gipsy orchestra.

VAST FORTUNE WAITING

He and a dozen other equally genuine sons and nine bona fide widows were dug up in all sorts of places from slums to vaudeville and by 1930 had divided £20,000,000 of the whole estate.

But there's a lot more in the kitty, awaiting other heirs when and if they are found.

The legal detective work was so difficult and costly that two corporations, each capitalised at £2,000,000, were formed to carry it on.

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One of these devotes itself exclusively to the late Commander of the Faithful's interests in Palestine real estate, amounting to one-seventh of the entire country. This corporation is now facing retrial of a test case before the Land Court of Jaffa, ordered by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

If the heirs win, their names will be reinstated in the Land Register of Palestine and everything will be right where it was before the war—that is, all set for further legal action, probably destined to run into the deep future.

The other corporation takes care of equally large holdings, located in Greece, Macedonia, and elsewhere. These lands, once controlled by Turkey, are subject to new and changing laws, so that the process may well go Into the third and fourth generation of lawyers and still, have something Abdul Hamid II, the man they called "Abdul the Damned." left for the great-grandchildren of the original heirs.

The legal fraternity should not be blamed too much for the law's delay. Abdul deliberately scrambled his affairs. Foreign diplomats and his own countrymen who tried to do business with him considered him the most dangerous and crafty scoundrel they had met —but that was not all.

Baroness Anima von Severing, the specially-trained German spy, sent by Ambassador Marschall von Bieberstein to vamp her way into the heart of the Sultan, came out of the palace and harem with such a tale of horror that Europeans would not, believe it.

In the first place even a Turkish Sultan did not really need to live such a nightmare life, in palaces swarming with spies, counterspies, assassins and counter-assassins, with…

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…guards to feel of draperies for a man with a dagger; with floors and halls planted with oubliettes—into which one would fall if he took the wrong turn; and bear traps made in the United States, which would get him if he stepped behind a curtain; with whispering galleries, spies in the kitchen, and spy waiters, who served food in locked caskets and had to eat of it liberally before the Sultan did.

Secondly, no normal man could endure such nerve strain long without going mad; yet "Abdul the Damned" thrived on it for most of his 33-year reign of terror The explanation came out slowly from evidence put together, after he was dethroned.

ABDUL LOVED INTRIGUE

The man loved this sort of life; It was his hobby which he enjoyed as explorers enjoy dangers in the jungles or the Arctics or as women enjoy crying at a sad movie. He was a genius at it, always outsmarting the men he teased into attempting to assassinate him and then taking his "just" revenge

Discipline in the harem was strict, enforced by the woman-hating eunuchs. The penalties ran from beatings for such minor offences as a wife's forgetting her identification perfume to strangling with a bowstring for having a weapon in the presence of the Sultan, and, of course, for infidelity. The death penalty could be imposed only by the lord and master himself.

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This Sultan seems to have been rather lenient about goings-on in his-harem as long as they did not involve political machinations. Spies informed him that, at certain times, his wives were enjoying highball parties, a heinous offence in Prohibition Turkey, but Abdul was more curious than angry. He set a squad of spies to find out how anyone could bring in a bottle when even the chief eunuch had to be searched before entering. If bottles could be smuggled in, he reasoned, so might pistols.

A little detective work revealed that the liquor had been introduced into the seraglio in rubber hot-water bottles under the clothing of the eunuchs. Also revealed was the fact that, although the tipple was the cheapest imitation Scotch whisky made in Japan, the fair customers were paying the price of genuine Empress Josephine brandy.

Abdul, instead of scolding or punishing any of the culprits, ordered one of his agents to muscle in on the racket and to add something to the liquor. The result was an awfully sick harem and no more smuggling. .

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(Continued on Page 16)

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He used them to convey confidential misinformation to their lovers, who passed it on to his adversaries, who then betrayed themselves into ' his hands. Then, when the women were no longer useful, he did not denounce them, lest other wives might become more cautious. He merely sent them home—but they did not arrive.

It looked as if Abdul had committed nearly 200 perfect crimes connected with his harem alone; but murder will out, even in the Orient, though, like everything else there, it takes time.

In 1938, engineers started dredging for the foundations of a new bridge from Istanbul to Pera, across the Bosphorus. Quite as anywhere else in the world, crowds gathered to watch the scoop come up, full of mud and slime, to be disgorged on a scow.

This went on for a couple of days and then, from a location somewhat further from shore, the shovel began to bring up slimy, glistening objects which the dredging crew assumed to be rocks.

After 15 of these had come to view the spectators were surprised to see the scoop stop in mid-air and to hear cries of, "Allah preserve and keep us!" while the crew members brushed their shoulders to remove any curses that might be settling on them.

Presently they tumbled into boats which were rowed ashore in undignified, un-Oriental haste. The occupants then ran, not walked, to the nearest police station.

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Though it was the noon hour, which all true believers should devote to nourishment and meditation, the cop waived the proprieties and came immediately. Two skulls grinning down from the scoop moved them to examine the supposed rocks, which turned out to be leather sacks, each holding a skeleton—17 in all.

Study of the skeletons showed .them to be of women, mostly young. Around each bony neck hung a silver crescent by a silver chain, since almost every woman in Turkey wore a silver crescent and these were not inscribed, they seemed useless clues. The police reasoned that since the sacks were all alike and had been dumped in one spot, they represented mass murder.

What puzzled them beyond understanding was that no such number of missing women had been reported, at one time, during the almost 30 years of the new regime and leather would hardly last that long in the warm waters of the straits.

There is no use pondering the imponderable, because it will never be revealed unless Allah so wills. In this case Allah did so will, his instrument being a delegation of learned men from the Historical Department of Istanbul University.

Permitted to examine the silver crescents, the historians were able to identify them as of a peculiar weight and size, made specially for members of the harem of Abdul Hamid II.

Furthermore, two indicated that their wearers had been wives of the second class, known as Kadines (dames);

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another was an Ikbal (glamorous one), not a wife of any class, but a reigning favorite, powerful at the moment but likely to be dropped back to the common herd of odalisks, to which class the remaining 14 belonged.

Thus, 17 of Abdul's 200 missing wives were accounted for, and no doubt most of the rest, together with the missing eunuchs, are also reposing somewhere in the mud of the Bosphorus.

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1946-10-04: Abdul Hamid's Heirs

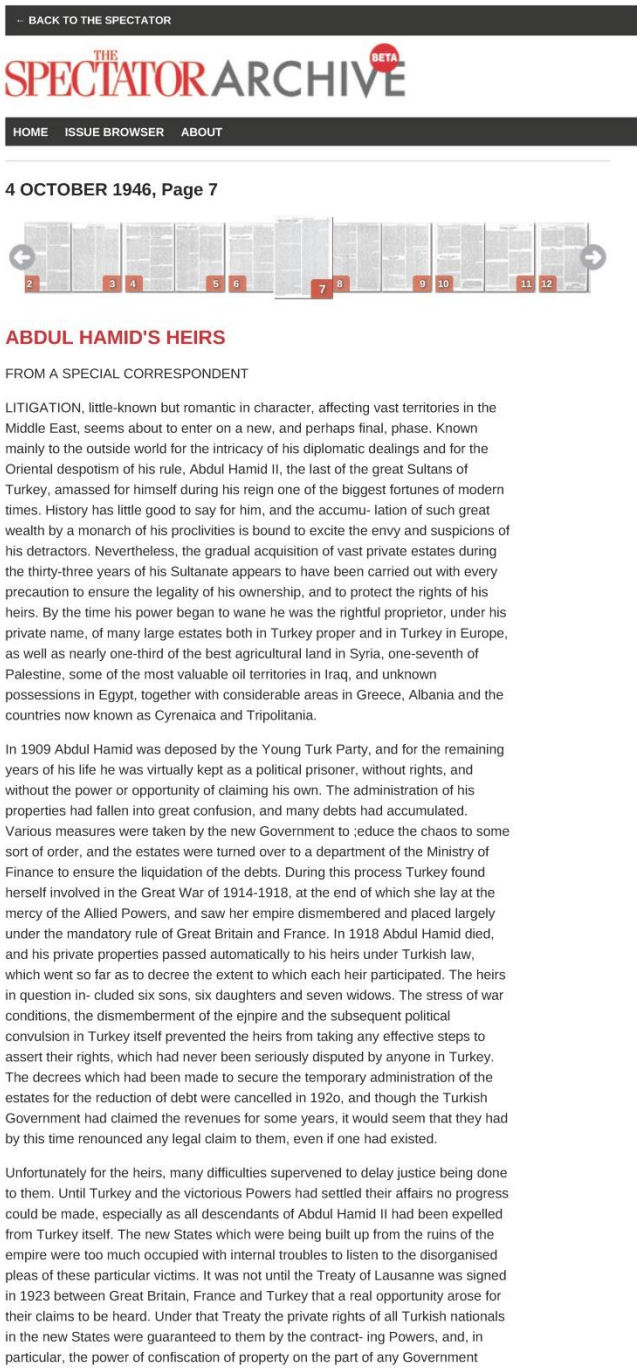
ABDUL HAMID'S HEIRS

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LITIGATION, little-known but romantic in character, affecting vast territories in the Middle East, seems about to enter on a new, and perhaps final, phase. Known mainly to the outside world for the intricacy of his diplomatic dealings and for the Oriental despotism of his rule, Abdul Hamid II, the last of the great Sultans of Turkey, amassed for himself during his reign one of the biggest fortunes of modern times. History has little good to say for him, and the accumulation of such great wealth by a monarch of his proclivities is bound to excite the envy and suspicions of his detractors. Nevertheless, the gradual acquisition of vast private estates during the thirty-three years of his Sultanate appears to have been carried out with every precaution to ensure the legality of his ownership, and to protect the rights of his heirs. By the time his power began to wane he was the rightful proprietor, under his private name, of many large estates both in Turkey proper and in Turkey in Europe, as well as nearly one-third of the best agricultural land in Syria, one-seventh of Palestine, some of the most valuable oil territories in Iraq, and unknown possessions in Egypt, together with considerable areas in Greece, Albania and the countries now known as Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

In 1909 Abdul Hamid was deposed by the Young Turk Party, and for the remaining years of his life he was virtually kept as a political prisoner, without rights, and without the power or opportunity of claiming his own. The administration of his properties had fallen into great confusion, and many debts had accumulated. Various measures were taken by the new Government to reduce the chaos to some sort of order, and the estates were turned over to a department of the Ministry of Finance to ensure the liquidation of the debts. During this process Turkey found herself involved in the Great War of 1914-1918, at the end of which she lay at the mercy of the Allied Powers, and saw her empire dismembered and placed largely under the mandatory rule of Great Britain and France. In 1918 Abdul Hamid died, and his private properties passed automatically to his heirs under Turkish law, which went so far as to decree the extent to which each heir participated. The heirs in question included six sons, six daughters and seven widows. The stress of war conditions, the dismemberment of the empire and the subsequent political convulsion in Turkey itself prevented the heirs from taking any effective steps to assert their rights, which had never been seriously disputed by anyone in Turkey. The decrees which had been made to secure the temporary administration of the estates for the reduction of debt were cancelled in 192o, and though the Turkish Government had claimed the revenues for some years, it would seem that they had by this time renounced any legal claim to them, even if one had existed.

Unfortunately for the heirs, many difficulties supervened to delay justice being done to them. Until Turkey and the victorious Powers had settled their affairs no progress could be made, especially as all descendants of Abdul Hamid II had been expelled from Turkey itself. The new States which were being built up from the ruins of the empire were too much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Unfortunately for the heirs, many difficulties supervened to delay justice being done to them. Until Turkey and the victorious Powers had settled their affairs no progress could be made, especially as all descendants of Abdul Hamid II had been expelled from Turkey itself. The new States which were being built up from the ruins of the empire were too much occupied with internal troubles to listen to the disorganised pleas of these particular victims. It was not until the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923 between Great Britain, France and Turkey that a real opportunity arose for their claims to be heard. Under that Treaty the private rights of all Turkish nationals in the new States were guaranteed to them by the contract- ing Powers, and, in particular, the power of confiscation of property on the part of any Government

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The heirs immediately hastened to bring their claims before the Tribunal. The arguments were complicated, and rested very largely on events before the war. The Mixed Tribunal thankfully seized on this point and disclaimed jurisdiction, and the heirs were compelled once more to consider how they could assert their rights and obtain justice from a number of different Governments, who would undoubtedly regard with some coldness any attempts to secure these vast and wealthy properties. The first task for the heirs was to organise themselves and other members of the Imperial family who had certain claims. The family was widely scattered. Many of them were suspicious of any attempt to "interfere" with their inheritance, and it was some time before an agreement was reached and the necessary funds for the great fight ahead were obtained. By 1934 all was ready, and an approach was made to the British Government, as one of the signatories of the Treaty of Lausanne, to ask for a favourable response to the appeal of the heirs for the protection of their rights as private citizens. The negotiations were protracted into 1936.

The British Government found themselves, not for the first time, awkwardly placed. Many of the properties lay in territories which were, or which had in the immediate past been, under their mandatory rule. In Iraq alone, which had recently been given complete independence in a form which ignored possible claims on the late Sultan's estates, the whole question of oil-rights would be affected. Not only had the Sultan owned many of the oil-producing areas, but he had acquired working concessions and had spent some £200,000 in developing them. The safest thing to do was to play for time. The Government accordingly replied to the heirs that no support could be given to their claims until such claims had been asserted in a British court of law. A personal appeal by the Caliph to King George V brought the same response. Once again the heirs found the long road to justice impeded with delays and obstacles.

In 1937 a test action was brought against the Palestine Government to claim an interesting property of about 1,000 acres in the vicinity of Gaza. The case seemed clear. The title deeds still bore the name of Abdul Hamid, and though the Government had registered its claim to the property, there was nothing to show any legal grounds for this arbitrary act. The case was heard before an English president supported by an Arab judge. Unfortunately the latter knew no English, the language in which the case was heard and documents recorded as a matter of convenience. The two judges disagreed, the English president pronouncing in favour of the heirs and the Arab judge against them. There was sonic dispute as to procedure in such circumstances, but eventually the Attorney-General of Palestine, who was conducting the case on behalf of the Government, and the counsel for the

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War-time delays and the desperate attempts of the Palestine Government to improve their evidence now that they had secured a second chance of presenting it, caused further long delays, and it was not until the end of 1945 that the case was reheard before the Land Court. The atmosphere was charged with the intense political excitement which was a prelude to the disturbances and terrorism of 1946. Interested parties—and there were many who had serious reasons for being interested both inside and outside Palestine —were busy with propaganda. It was openly asserted, in an en- deavour to bias Moslem opinion, that the heirs had struck a bargain with the Jews, to whom they were said to have traded their rights. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The heirs them- selves were staunch Moslems, closely connected with the Caliphate and with some of the leading Mohammedan houses of the world. The Government were clearly apprehensive that the cession of so much valuable property to Moslem, and therefore Arab, sympathisers might compromise them with the Zionists.

The case lasted for several days, and it was a few weeks more before judgement

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War-time delays and the desperate attempts of the Palestine Government to improve their evidence now that they had secured a second chance of presenting it, caused further long delays, and it was not until the end of 1945 that the case was reheard before the Land Court. The atmosphere was charged with the intense political excitement which was a prelude to the disturbances and terrorism of 1946. Interested parties—and there were many who had serious reasons for being interested both inside and outside Palestine —were busy with propaganda. It was openly asserted, in an endeavour to bias Moslem opinion, that the heirs had struck a bargain with the Jews, to whom they were said to have traded their rights. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The heirs them- selves were staunch Moslems, closely connected with the Caliphate and with some of the leading Mohammedan houses of the world. The Government were clearly apprehensive that the cession of so much valuable property to Moslem, and therefore Arab, sympathisers might compromise them with the Zionists.

The case lasted for several days, and it was a few weeks more before judgement was given. This time it was in favour of the Government, resting on the legal validity of a decree by Abdul Hamid's successor in 1909, ostensibly turning over the properties to the administration of the Turkish Government. A climax appeared to have been reached, but while the question of further action was being considered fresh developments took place in Turkey itself. Independently of the main effort, certain of the Sultan's heirs laid claim through the Turkish courts to properties which were part of their inheritance from Abdul Hamid in Turkey. Again there was some difference of opinion between judges, as a result of which a plenary session of the Court of Cassation was called to decide the matter. After full deliberation this court decided by a two-thirds majority that «it has been permitted to transfer to the heirs of Abdul Hamid the properties appearing in his name on the Cadastre, which he had acquired with his own funds."

Whatever arguments lawyers of other countries may produce, it is now clear that the Turkish Supreme Court of Justice has openly acknowledged the heirs' right to property which had not in fact ever passed into the legal possession of the Turkish Government. Under the Treaty of Lausanne the successor States of the Turkish Empire acquired no more rights to such properties than could be derived from the Turkish Government itself, and any legislation for the confiscation of private property was forbidden by the Treaty. It would therefore seem that the whole position will now have to be reviewed by the Governments concerned, most of whom base a substantial portion of their legal code, and especially that part relating to property, on the old Ottoman law.

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Meanwhile, the heirs, who for many years have seen a large fortune eluding their grasp, have once more had their hopes revived. The amount of the fortune is almost beyond calculation ; but, if the back dues for twenty-five years are taken into account, the total must exceed Li,000,000,000 sterling. Obviously, the full realisation of this sum is out of the question. The majority of the heirs have been living in circumstances bordering on penury, and would be only too glad to come to a reasonable settlement which would enable them to pass the rest of their days in comfort. The future still remains in doubt, but the slow wheels of justice seem to be moving steadily towards the heirs, who may one day claim that their story will rank beside the most romantic of those of men who have sought other legitimate fortunes in the remote corners of the world.

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« Abdul Hamid's Heirs », *The Spectator* (F.C. Westley), vol. 177 (octobre 1946). https://www.spectator.co.uk/. URL : http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/4th-october-1946/7/abdul-hamids-heirs. p. 7-8.

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1946-12-01: Heirs fought to win a despot's riches

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FACT'S London News Bureau

The Turkish Supreme Court's ruling this week that the estates of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid II were his personal property gave fresh hope to his heirs of sharing them.

The estates, located In Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Albania, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, were valued at £300-million when Hamid died at the age of 76 in 1918. He was the richest man in the world.

But for 25 years descendants have been pressing their claims in other courts, including Palestine, where they were defeated on a legal technicality last year.

International lawyers are now thrashing out the question whether Turkish courts have jurisdiction over the Sultan's properties in other countries.

The heirs chasing the huge fortune are his seven wives, their six sons and six daughters, all of whom were banned from Turkey when Hamid was deposed in 1909.

Two companies — the first in Palestine, the second in other territories — were formed to back the heirs' claims.

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Legal costs covered

They were registered in Canada and each has a capital of £1½-million, of which half has been allocated by the heirs.

The rest of the capital has been put up by London and other businessmen who, if the claim succeeds, will receive half the value of the estate.

Hamid was Emperor of the Ottoman Empire, a despot who became dreaded in the Near and Middle East. He drenched Constantinople in the blood of 5000 Armenians in 1896, earned the title of Great Assassin and Abdul the Damned.

Shifty eyed, hook-nosed and emaciated, the nails of his sinewy hands bitten down to the quick, he lived in constant fear of assassination, seldom leaving the grounds of his Yildiz Palace, never unguarded.

The revolvers in his pockets invariably spoiled the sit of his Savile Row clothes. He always received his guests standing behind a doorway so that, he could beat them to the draw if necessary.

When the Sultan was deposed in 1909, his enemies discovered that he was still virtual ruler of the Mediterranean. He had bought outright nearly one third of the best farmland in Syria, a seventh of Palestine and the richest oil territory in Iraq, in addition to his other huge estates.

Hamid kept the largest harem on record, maintained 300 concubines. When he tired of women he had them murdered and their bodies thrown, in sacks, into the Bosphorus.

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"Heirs fought to win a despot's riches", *The Sun* (Sydney, NSW : 1910 - 1954), Sun. 1 Dec. 1946, Page 1. The National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article229547758

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1947-10-25: Liquidation of an empire

Liquidation of an empire

The greatest liquidation in the world's history is almost complete.

The judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Britain's supreme authority in law, has almost finished the monumental task of carving up the great Ottoman Empire and deciding the legal complexities of its new ownership.

After such tremendous tasks, consideration of legal tangles such as whether the Australian Labor Government has the right to nationalise the Commonwealth's banks, will be child's play for Privy Councillors.

The story can be best begun by introducing the characters as they were introduced to the Privy Council when the case was called, in 1941: "Between the Heirs of Prince Mohamed Selim, son of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey, Appellants, and the Attorney-General, on behalf of the Government of Palestine, Respondent (No. 21 of 1940)."

Last Sultan of Turkey

Thus filed and classified and numbered, there rose up again in a quiet room in Westminster the ghost of that terrible old man who was the last great Sultan of Turkey, and whose enemies called him "Abdul the Damned."

For 33 years, from 1876 to 1909, he ruled despotically the territories of the ancient Ottoman Empire, shrunk, it is true, since the days when it stood up, menacing as a tidal wave, seeming to threaten the very existence of Europe itself, and still, at the end of the 19th century,

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And Abdul Hamid ruled this empire as one vast police-State, with spies, and censorship, and wholesale arrests, and massacres, and a system of police informers, and enemies ruthlessly hunted down, while, within his fortified palace at Yildiz, he held the threads of a power which carried into the 20th century the spirit of the "Arabian Nights."

Then, in 1909, came revolution, and he was deposed. For nine years more he lived, a political prisoner, dying near Smyrna in 1918, at the end of that great war which not only blew to pieces his own former empire, but with it smashed the empires of Austria and Czarist Russie as well.

On his death, the right to this fabulous fortune passed by Turkish law to his heirs—sons, daughters, and several widows.

In 1918 when Abdul died, and long after, with the embers of war still smouldering, and the ruins of the Ottoman Empire crashing about their heads, these, impoverished people found it out of the question to claim their inheritance. In 1923 came the Treaty of Lausanne, making peace between Great Britain, France, and a new small Turkey.

In the States newly carved out of the old empire, the private rights of Turkish citizens were specially safeguarded against any attempt at confiscation, and this, of course, meant that the private rights of the heirs of Abdul the Damned were kept alive like anybody else's.

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But what about the properties left by Abdul in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere? It was 10 years before the family had put their house in order sufficiently to take the field and press their claims. The British Government when appealed to, would not give them any support until those claims had been asserted in a British court of law.

But the existence of the British mandate in Palestine seemed to suggest a starting.-point for such a legal action, and so, in 1937, a test case was begun in the Land Court, at Jaffa, claiming some property in the neighbourhood of Gaza.

This had once been owned by the deposed Sultan, but, in 1932, it had been registered in the name of the High Commissioner for Palestine, in trust for the Government of Palestine.

Registration attacked

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In May, 1937, the case came on in the Land Court before an English president and an Arab judge. Cases of wide human interest sometimes have a way of tapering down to a fine legal point. The first thing to settle here was this: Which side had to prove its case? Must the Palestine Government prove that its title, registered in 1932, was sound in law? Or did that registration stand, unless the Sultan's heirs could prove that it was unsound? The court held unanimously that the burden of proof lay on the Government, but after that they differed.

The English president thought that the Government had not proved its case; the Arab judge thought that it had. So, on the ground that the Government had failed to convince the whole court, since it had only convinced one member of it, a decree was made against it.

Of course, there was an appeal, and the, Supreme Court, holding that the burden of proof was on the Sultan's heirs after all, ordered a new trial.

From the courts of mandated territories an appeal lies to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and, accordingly, before it, the heirs of Abdul Hamid laid their appeal in 1940; in the following year, it came on for hearing.

Europe was then in the grip of a far more savage war than that which had wrecked the Ottoman Empire a generation earlier. England itself was besieged, London bombarded, but in a room in Westminster, five members of his Majesty's Privy Council examined documents, weighed the learned arguments of counsel, and held in their hands the destiny of the despot's for tune.

Again, the legal battle was this question of burden of proof, and in the end the Lords of the Judicial Committee held that the whole value of land registration demanded that the existing register should be treated as valid unless it could be shown that a title had been registered on it by fraud or mistake.

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Fresh trial in Palestine

So, after all, the Sultan's heirs must prove their case, and there must be a fresh trial in Palestine.

That decision was given on April 28, 1941. In the midst of arms, the law had not been silent. But war and civil commotion hamper and obstruct the machinery of litigation. Not until the latter part of 1946 could the hearings in Palestine be resumed for a second time.

The ultimate result will be an omen, good or bad, for those whose hopes are fixed on Abdul Hamid's lands in many scattered places. And, perhaps, in the end, the voice of the oracle at Westminster will be required to speak the final word.

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"Liquidation of an empire", *World's News* (Sydney, NSW : 1901 - 1955), Saturday 25 October 1947, page 11. The National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article137125898

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1948-04-21: The King's Justice-Heirs to Sultan Hamid

THE KING'S JUSTICE

THE HEIRS OF SULTAN ABDUL HAMID

The King's Justice, as administered in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, demanded many variations in the art of planting in order to acclimatise it in so many different soils. Sometimes, the land in which it now grows is an ancient British freehold. Sometimes, Britain's tenure is like a leasehold, or perhaps a trusteeship, in the case of protectorates or mandated territories. When that is so, all sorts of problems, left over by the last tenants or the former owners, help to embarrass those responsible for the continuity of the administration of justice, said Francis Cowper, in a B.B.B. broadcast.

Take one instance, just on Europe's doorstep, in, a land much in the news at the moment. If in England, the war before last began the break-up of the great landed estates with all their subsequent re-adjustments, that was only a pale reflection of the break-up that was going on elsewhere — the dissolution of mighty empires. In particular, the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire, cut up into lots, and distributed into new hands, left Britain in occupation of a particularly perplexing portion of the dismembered estate.

Ghost of Terrible Old Man

I can best begin the story I have now to tell by introducing the characters as they were introduced to the Privy Council when their case was called, in 1941: "Between the Heirs of Prince Mohamed Selim, son of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey, Appellants, and the Attorney General, on behalf of the Government of Palestine, Respondent (No. 21 of 1940)." Thus, filed and classified and numbered, there rose up again in a quiet room in Westminster the ghost of that terrible old man, who was the last great Sultan of Turkey, and whose enemies called him "Abdul the Damned."

For 33 years, from 1876 to 1909, he ruled despotically the territories of the ancient Ottoman Empire, shrunk, it is true, since the days when it stood up, menacing as a tidal wave, seeming to threaten the very existence of Europe itself, and still, at the end of the 19th century, closing the western end of the Mediterranean, and lying across the Balkans from the Adriatic to Constantinople Beyond the straits, it stretched from the shores of Palestine to the Persian Gulf sweeping under a single dominion the Holy City of Jerusalem, the mysteries and memories of Baghdad, the newly exploited riches of the Mosul oilfields, and the lost and buried civilisations of Mesopotamia.

And Abdul Hamid ruled this empire as one vast police-state, with spies, and censorship, and wholesale arrests, and massacres, and a system of police informers, and enemies ruthlessly hunted down, while, within his fortified palace at Yildiz, he held the threads of a power which carried into the twentieth century the spirit of the "Arabian Nights." Then, in 1909, came revolution, and he was deposed. For nine years more he lived, political prisoner, dying near Smyrna in 1918 at the end of that great war which not only blew to pieces his own former empire, but with it smashed beyond repair the

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empires of Austria and Tsarist Russia as well.

But the blow which cost Abdul his throne had not robbed him of his personal fortune, a fortune of oriental proportions, in lands, and jewels, and money. He owned vast estates, acquired not only in Turkey itself but in Greece and Albania, Palestine and Syria. Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, while in developing the oil-producing areas, of which he had become possessed in Iraq, he had spent as much as £200,000. On his death, the right to this fabulous fortune passed by Turkish law to his heirs — sons, daughters, and several widows.

In 1918, when Abdul died, and long afterwards, with the embers of war still smouldering, and the ruins of the Ottoman Empire crashing about their heads, these impoverished people found it out of the question to claim their inheritance. In 1923 came the Treaty of Lausanne, making peace between Great Britain, France and a new, small Turkey.

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This had once been owned by the deposed sultan, but, in 1932, it had been registered in the name of the High Commissioner for Palestine, in trust for the Government of Palestine. In court, the Government relied on the legal validity of this registration and also on two Turkish irades, or decrees, made in 1908 and 1909, by which, so it was argued, this estate had been handed over to be administered by the Turkish Government of the day, thus ceasing to be the private property of the sultan. The heirs attacked the validity of the registration, relying on an earlier registration in the name of the sultan, in 1886.

In May, 1937, the case came on in the Land Court before an English president and an Arab judge. Cases of wide human interest sometimes have a way of tapering down to a fine legal point. The first thing to settle here was this: On- whom did the burden of proof lie? This question of burden of proof means of course: which party has to attack across open ground, and which can sit under cover behind their defences? The most familiar example to everyone is the British principle that a man is presumed innocent until he is proved guilty and that if the prosecution does not establish its case, he must be acquitted.

Well, in this claim, which side had to prove its case? Must the Palestine Government prove that its title, registered in 1932, was sound in law? Or did that registration stand, unless the sultan's heirs could prove that it was unsound? The court

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"The King's Justice – The Heirs to Sultan Hamid - Ghost of Terrible Man", *Kalgoorlie Miner* (WA : 1895 - 1950), Wed. 21 April 1948, Page 2. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page9061087

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1948-06-05: The King's Justice. Heirs to Sultan Hamid. Ghost of Terrible Man

The King's Justice

Heirs to Sultan Hamid

GHOST OF TERRIBLE MAN

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Take one instance, just on Europe's doorstep, in a land much in the news at the moment. If in England, the war before last began the break-up of the great landed estates with all their sub sequent re-adjustments, that was only a pale reflection of the break-up that was going on elsewhere — the dissolution of mighty empires. In particular, the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire, cut up into lots, and distributed into new hands, left Britain in occupation of a particularly perplexing portion of the dismembered estate.

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For thirty-three years, from 1876 to 1909, he ruled despotically the territories of the ancient Ottoman Empire, shrunk, it is true, since the days when it stood up, menacing as a tidal wave, seeming to threaten the very existence of Europe itself, and still, at the end of the 19th century, closing the western end of the Mediterranean, and lying across the Balkans from the Adriatic to Constantinople. Beyond the straits, it stretched from the shores of Palestine to the Persian Gulf sweeping under a single dominion the Holy City of Jerusalem, the mysteries and memories of Baghdad, the newly exploited riches of the Mosul oilfields, and the lost and buried civilisations of Mesopotamia.

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"The King's Justice - Heirs to Sultan Hamid - Ghost of Terrible Man", *Geraldton Guardian* (WA : 1948 - 1950), Sat. 5 June 1948, page 4. National Library of Australia. URL: http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/67840389

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1951-03-13: Sewed Wives Up in Sacks — Heirs Fight for His Millions

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Abdul the Damned is as dead as the discarded wives whom he had sewn up in sacks and flung into the Bosphorus, but his wealth goes marching on. Millions of pounds' worth of personal jewellery are still held in trust in the vaults of the Royal Ottoman Bank in Istanbul. In a room in the former royal palace the pearl-decked effigies of his ancestors blaze with rubies and emeralds, a collection assessed for insurance at £28,000,000.

Sultan of Turkey until he was deposed and dragged screaming from his throne room, Abdul Hamid was the richest man of his time. He owned a seventh part of Palestine, the black gold of the Mosul oilfields, town property from Basra to Baghdad, and vast estates in Syria, Greece, Egypt and elsewhere totalling altogether £1,000,000,000.

Today British business men are backing the harem heirs in the close fought climax of a series of legal actions which have now lasted nearly 30 years. In his lifetime Abdul's civil list allowed him four wives and 200 concubines. When he died he left a mare's nest of Arabian Nights wealth and scrambling descendants.

One hundred and two claimants came forward. They soon found that although the old Turkish empire had been destroyed, the Treaty of Lausanne contained a clause permitting Abdul Hamid's private properties to pass to his legal heirs.

Cousins, aunts, nephews, grand-daughters united tor their share. Such advocates as Sir Stafford Cripps, Sir Walter Monckton and Nicholas Politis, former president of the League of Nations, expressed favourable opinions of their case. But the heirs spent £300,000 in appeals and counter appeals without winning a farthing.

A test case was fought when a group of contestants stormed and seized a Jerusalem hotel, declaring it was their legal property through Abdul Hamid. For three months even the guests' baggage was held to ransom. A judge decided against the contestants. After a fierce battle with the police, they were evicted.

Then two British companies were floated to back the heirs' hopes on a fifty-fifty basis. Thousands of small investors — country parsons, retired colonels eager for a flutter — built up funds up to £2,000,000. Even maiden ladies based fond hopes on this harem hangover.

One company staged a test case claiming a strip of Arab-farmed land near Gaza. The Jaffa land court gave a favourable decision and an appeal court reversed it. The case was fought to the level of the Privy Council, highest judicial arbiter of the British Empire, who — crowning touch in this queer tale — directed it back to the land court for re-hearing!

Palestine at that time was under British mandate. The land court turned down the heirs. Today, however, the new state of Israel has created a fresh basis of legal solidity. Still backed by the hopeful investors, four of Abdul's grandsons and five granddaughters have begun a new legal action. If they can win only a fraction of the £1,000,000,000, it spells fantastic fortune.

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"Sewed Wives Up in Sacks—Heirs Fight for His Millions", *Pittsworth Sentinel* (Qld. : 1919 - 1954), Tuesday 13 March 1951, Page 2. The National Library of Australia. URL: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/197889771/

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1954-11-14: Still Fighting For The Fortune Of Morose Old Sultan

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In 1918 a morose, taciturn, sad-eyed old man died in custody, in Salonika. For nine, lonely, discontented years he had lived a prisoner. Before being deposed and dragged screaming from his throne room, he had been Abdul Hamid II, the last effective sultan of Turkey, all-powerful despot of the sprawling Ottoman empire.

Each day of his exile he had sighed for the wealth, luxury and sovereignly that had once been his, for the countless slaves, eunuchs, and attendants who had ministered to him, for the hundreds of beautiful, desirable women who had been his playthings.

For 32 years Abdul Hamid injured his power with a reign of terror that saw daily arrests and frequent massacres. Any who dared criticise or oppose him were tortured, starved, mutilated, impaled, poisoned or hanged.

He had sewn up his unwanted wives in sacks and dumped them in the Bosphorus.

Not for nothing was he called, all over the world by the name that will serve in history "Abdul the Damned."

His private and personal fortune was conservatively, estimated at £1000 million, His death precipitated a wild scramble for it by his numerous descendants. The scramble is still going on. More than 100 heirs have made claims for a share of Abdul's fabulous fortune. So far, not one has received a. penny. The wealth of the Sultan remains a gigantic, untapped treasure chest. It has lured thousands of speculators, companies, and syndicates to risk large sums in backing the heirs in a legal fight for what they esteem their right. In return, the speculators have been promised a half-share of any property received by the heirs in settlement of their claims.

To date, they have expended more than three million pounds in unsuccessful court battles.

Abdul Hamid's wealth consisted of cash, gold, jewellery and real estate. Millions of pounds of his gold and personal jewellery are still held in trust in the vaults of the Royal Ottoman Bank in Istanbul.

More than £25,000,000 is similarly held by Cairo banks.

In one room of his former royal palace are scories of effigies of his ancestors. They blaze with rubies, emeralds and pearls, and are said to be insured by the present Turkish Government for many millions.

By far the largest portion of the nest egg of Abdul the Damned, however, was in real estate. In area it totalled about 7500 square miles.

He owned a seventh part of present-day Israel, 200 square miles in the heart of the Mosul oilfields, town property from, Basra to Baghdad, estates in Syria, Greece, Albania, Turkey, Transjordan, and Libya, large slices of the cities of Smyrna, Salonika, Jalna, and Istanbul.

The story of the legacy of Abdul the Damned starts in 1908, when discontent over his rule caused an army uprising, engineered by the powerful Young Turk Movement. In July, men of the Third Corps, stationed at Salonika, rebelled and overthrew their officers. They seized hostages and proclaimed a constitution for the future government of Turkey.

History's Great Stories

THE RICHES OF ABDUL THE DAMNED

Still Fighting For The Fortune Of Morose Old Sultan

IN 1918 a morose, taciturn, sad-eyed old man died in custody, in Salonika. For nine lonely, discontented years he had lived a prisoner. Before being deposed and dragged screaming from his throne room, he had been Abdul Hamid II, the last effective sultan of Turkey, all-powerful despot of the sprawling Ottoman empire.

Each day of his exile he had sighed for the wealth, luxury and sovereignty that had once been his, for the countless slaves, eunuchs, and attendants who had ministered to him, for the hundreds of beautiful, desirable women who had been his playthings.

For 32 years Abdul Hamid insured his power with a reign of terror that saw daily arrests and ifrequent massacres. Any who dared criticise or oppose him were tortured, starved, mutilated, impaled, poisoned or hanged.

JAMIL ADRA CC BY NC ND

LEFT: Abdul the Damned, the last effective Sultan of Turkey, whose fortune, worth £1,000 million, was confiscated by a rebel uprising in 1908. Claiming the confiscation was illegal, his heirs have battled for years to win title to the fortune.

Word was sent to the Sultan that if he did not accept the terms of the constitution, troops would march on the capital. Old, ailing, and fearful of his skin, Abdul Hamid hastily capitulated and endorsed the constitution. He permitted the exile and murder of scores of his advisers and officials.

Still not satisfied, the Young Turk leaders demanded that his private wealth be considered national property.

Abdul Hamid n was cornered. With ill-grace, he consented to the issue of an Irade, or decree, authorising the confiscation of his property by the State. The Sultan, however, was a shrewd and crafty plotter. While openly acceding to the demands of the Committee of Union and Progress as the Young Turks called themselves, he secretly planned counter-revolution.

In April, 1909, he instigated an uprising by undisciplined and poorly equipped troops in the capital. The efficient Third Corps at Salonika marched on Istanbul. After a short, bloody encounter they took the city.

The fighting reached its peak on the night of April 23. While battle raged, the Sultan awaited news in his great rambling palace of Yildiz. It was a panic night. The lights failed. Hundreds of wives, children, concubines and eunuchs in the harem went crazy with fear.

As they shrieked and howled, Abdul ordered his personal guards to march noisily round the palace to drawn the din. When this had no effect, he ordered his band to play brassy music.

The animals of his private zoo joined in. Their screeching and snarling was added to the blare of instruments and the wails from the harem.

In this mad bedlam, Abdul the Damned sat in his own quarters, huddled in a shawl, while a nervous chamberlain read Conan Doyle's latest Sherlock Holmes story aloud.

By the morning, the Committee Union and Progress were in undisputed control of Istanbul. Their leader, General Essad Bey, and a delegation confronted the Sultan.

Brusquely they informed him he had been deposed exile at Salonika. When and was to be sent into he argued they ordered their guards to drag him from the palace.

With the departure of the Sultan, his harem was broken up. A few were permitted to accompany Abdul Hamid into exile. The rest were sent back to their families, a release they took with bad grace.

The heirs who now claim the Sultan's property declare these Irades invalid and illegal. They maintain that the first, by Abdul Hamid himself, was made under duress and is therefore void. The second was never ratified by the Turkish Parliament and contravened the new constitution, which expressly forbade confiscation.

In 1918, Abdul Hamid died. In 1922 the Turkish equivalent of the English Court of Chancery recoginised 21 persons as legitimate heirs of the Sultan. At the same time it denied the legality of the two Irades of 1908 and 1909 which confiscated his property.

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He had sewn up his unwanted wives in sacks and dumped them in the Bosphorus. Not for nothing was he called, all over the world by the name that will serve in history, "Abdul the Damned."

His private and personal fortune was conservatively estimated at £1000 million. His death precipitated a wild scramble for it by his numerous descendants. The scramble is still going on. More than 100 heirs have made claims for a share of Abdul's fabulous fortune. So far, not one has received a penny. The wealth of the Sultan remains a gigantic, untapped treasure chest. It has lured thousands of speculators, companies, and syndicates to risk large sums in backing the heirs in a legal fight for what they esteem their right. In return, the speculators have been promised a half-share of any property received by the heirs in settlement of their claims.

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LEFT: Abdul the Damned, the last effective Sultan of Turkey, whose fortune, worth £1000 million, was confiscated by a rebel uprising in 1908. Claiming the confiscation was illegal, his heirs have battled for years to win title to the fortune.

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But, by this time, as a defeated nation in World War I, Turkey had little say in the disposal of the real estate. But the claimants, case was given a boost in 1922; when a conference was held at Lausanne to conclude a peace treaty between Turkey and the victorious Allies.

To Courts

After much argument, a special clause was inserted in the Treaty of Lausanne. It admitted that the heirs might have some rights, but avoided responsibility by referring them to the law courts of the different countries where they claimed property.

With new hope, the world-scattered heirs of Abdul Hamid began to look for backers to prosecute their claims. Cousins, aunts, nephews and granddaughters demanded a share. The 21 heirs 'approved' according to the Turkish Court had grown to several hundreds.

Britain was the nation most likely to restore the rights — and Britain at that time controlled Palestine under mandate.

Palestine, therefore, became the scene of an all-out legal battle. A strip of land near Gaza was selected as the basis of a test case. In May, 1937, proceedings were begun in the Jaffa Land Court.

Still Going

This litigation took time and money. It dragged on for years, as the scene shifted from Jaffa to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to London, from London back to Jerusalem, the funds of the companies were exhausted. Eventually finance was obtained for a final gambler's throw, which also failed.

In a lengthy judgment the Jerusalem Court decreed that the land had properly passed to the Palestine Government, and the heirs of Abdul Hamid had no legal right to it.

The subsequent creation of the new state of Israel provided, it is believed, a fresh basis for legal action, so that the last has not been heard of the fight for the fortune of Abdul Hamid.

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A SPECIAL

"TRUTH" FEATURE

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"Still Fighting For The Fortune Of Morose Old Sultan", *Truth* (Brisbane, Qld. : 1900 - 1954), Sunday 14 November 1954, page 21. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article201189087

"The last Turkish sultan murdered his surplus wives and tortured his enemies", *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Friday 26 November 1954, page 7. National Library of Australia. URL: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article49974014

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1974-02: Heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid (International Law in Historical Perspective: State succession)

Heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid

[International Law in Historical Perspective: State succession, page 251. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1974.]

A typically traditional succession problem was laid before the courts still in the mandatory period. It concerned certain estates assertedly belonging in private ownership to the heirs of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II. See the case of the ***Heirs of the Prince Mohamed Selim v. the Government of Palestine,*** October-November 1937 *(A.D.* 1935-1937, Case No. 39): immovable properties, registered in the Land Books of Gaza in 1886 in the name of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and allowed to remain registered therein for the past 50 years as his private estate, despite his dethronement in 1908, the *Iradeh* of his successor Sultan Rashad of 7 May 1909, transferring all his properties from the Civil List to the Ottoman Treasury, and Art. 60 of the Peace Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. The two Judges in the Land Court of Jaffa, one British, the other Palestinian, were divided in opinion, the first being in favour of the Sultan's heirs.

The controversy was after various proceedings in Appellate Courts ultimately resolved by the Supreme Court of Palestine (sitting as Court of Civil Appeal) in a judgment of 31 May 1947 *(A.D.* 1947, Case No. 14) which turned on somewhat mysterious theories concerning "**acts of State**". The *Iradeh* of 1909 and a preceding *Iradeh* of 1908 were both held to be unconstitutional and invalid and not in themselves to come under the concept of an "**act of State**". The same applied to the subsequent validation or ratification of the 1909 *Iradeh* by virtue of the Ottoman Budget and Finance Laws. The Treaty of Lausanne, however, was an "**act of State**", the provisions of which could not be questioned by a Court in Palestine. The result of this reasoning was that the heirs of the Sultan were packed off because Art. 60 of the Treaty had made the, admittedly unconstitutional and invalid, *Iradeh's* unassailable in a Palestinian Court by its juridical effect of "**subrogating**" Palestine to the Ottoman Empire.

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Verzijl (J.H.J.H.W.), « Heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid », *International Law in Historical Perspective*: VII. State succession (p. 251), The Hague. The Netherlands, 1974 (International Law in Historical Perspective, 12, VII). URL : https://books.google.fr/books?id=SG9V4GjvS8YC. ISBN : 978-90-411-0548-6.

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2000-10-15: İsrail'in bombaladığı Gazze, Abdülhamid'in özel mülküydü

İsrail'in bombaladığı Gazze, Abdülhamid'in özel mülküydü

Haber Giriş: 15.10.2000

Murat BARDAKÇI

Bugün bize uzaklardaki apayrı bir dünya gibi görünen Gazze bir zamanlar Sultan **Abdülhamid**'in özel mülküydü ve hükümdarın ailesi Gazze'nin tapusunu alabilmek için 1946'ya kadar seneler süren hukuki bir mücadele vermişti.

Bugünlerde kan gölüne dönmek üzere olan Gazze'nin bir zamanlar **Sultan Abdülhamid**'in özel mülkü olduğunu ve **Abdülhamid** ailesinin dedelerinin bu "**mülküne"** sahip olabilmek için 1946'ya kadar uzun bir hukuki mücadele verdiğini pek bilmeyiz.

Mücadelenin kahramanı, **Abdülhamid**'in torunlarından **Nemika Sultan**'dı ve hadisenin temeli **Abdülhamid**'in hükümdarlığı sırasında İmparatorluğun değişik bölgelerindeki bazı arazilerin tapusunu kendi adına kaydettirmesinde, bu arada Gazze'yi de "**özel mülkü**" yapmasına dayanıyordu.

ARAPLAR KARŞI ÇIKTI

1924'te Türkiye sınırları dışına çıkartılan hanedan mensupları arasındaki **Abdülhamid**'in soyundan gelenler büyükbabalarının mal varlığınının bir bölümünü olsun kurtarabilmek için hukuki bir çabaya giriştiler. Eskiden imparatorluk sınırları içerisinde bulunan memleketlerde üstüste davalar açıldı. Uzun seneler süren ve neticede hemen hepsi kaybedilen bu davalarla ilgili haberlere zamanın Türk basını pek rağbet etmedi ama her duruşma Avrupa gazetelerinde sütunlar boyu yer aldı. Hukuki mücadelenin en uzun ve en ses getiren safhası ise, Gazze'de **Abdülhamid** adına kayıtlı bir araziyi geri alabilmek için açılan **Muharraka Kebire** davasıydı.

Davayı, **Abdülhamid**'in torunu **Nemika Sultan** açtı. Sultan, hükümdarın büyük oğlu **Şehzade Selim Efendi**'nin kızıydı ve Gazze'nin hemen içindeki 4 bin 580 dönümlük **Muharraka Kebire** bölgesini miras olarak talep ediyordu. Avukatlığını ise Beyrut Hukuk Fakültesi'nin profesörlerinden olan ve Arap dünyasının en seçkin hukukçusu olarak bilinen **İlyas Mur** üstlenmişti.

Profesör Mur, konuyu Yafa'daki Kadastro Mahkemesi'ne götürdü. Bölge o yıllarda İngiliz himayesi altındaydı ve mahkemelerde İngiliz ve Arap hakimler beraberce karar veriyorlardı. İngiliz hakim **Nemika Sultan'**ı haklı bulurken Arap hakim **''Gazze'nin** Abdülhamid'**le ne alákası var? Burası Filistin toprağıdır''** deyip talebi reddetti ama İngiliz hakimin kararı üstün geldiği için aile davayı kazanmış sayıldı.

Hukuki mücadele, asıl bundan sonra başladı.

Filistin yönetimi, karara itiraz etti. Kudüs'teki yüksek mahkemeye giden Arap hakim **''Türkiye'nin,** Abdülhamid'**e ait gayrımenkullere Meşrutiyet döneminde el koyarak devlete intikal ettirdiğini, dolayısıyla mirasçılarının bu araziler üzerinde hiçbir hakka sahip bulunmadıklarını''** ileri sürüyordu. Yüksek mahkeme bu görüşü benimseyip İngiliz hakimin Abdülhamid torunları lehine verdiği kararı bozunca, **Nemika Sultan'**ın avukatları dosyayı Londra'ya, İngiliz Kraliyet

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Haber Giriş: 15.10.2000 - 00:00,Son Güncelleme: 15.10.2000 - 00:01

İsrail'in bombaladığı Gaz:
Abdülhamid'in özel mülkü

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Konseyi'nin hukuk dairesine götürdüler. Konsey Kudüs'teki yüksek mahkemenin kararını bozdu, davanın yeniden görülmesini isteyip dosyayı geri gönderdi ancak duruşmaların Yafa'da değil, Kudüs'te yapılmasına karar verdi.

Davaya Kudüs Kadastro Mahkemesi'nin hakimi **Robert Windham** baktı ve duruşmalar tam beş sene devam etti. Kararın **Abdülhamid'**in torunlarının lehine çıkacağının hissedildiği günlerde Dünya Siyonist Teşkilátı **Nemika Sultan'**la temasa geçti ve sulktan'ın araziyi kendilerine satmasını teklif etti. **Nemika Sultan'**ın ödemeyi kabul ederek hak iddia ettiği araziyi davanın neticesini beklemeden Siyonist Teşkilatı'na satması **Abdülhamid'**in ailesinin de Yahudi göçüne taraftar olduğunu gösterecek ve Teşkilat bu gelişmeyi uluslararası alanda kullanacaktı. Ancak **Sultan** teklifi reddetti ve davanın neticesini bekleyeceğini söyledi.

11 YIL SONRA ELDE VAR HİÇ

Hakim **Windham,** kararını 1946'nın 17 Ocak'ında açıkladı ve **Abdülhamid** varislerinin bütün ümitlerini yıktı: Gazze'deki arazi hakikaten Sultan **Abdülhamid'**e aitti. Ancak İttihad ve Terakki hükümeti **Abdülhamid'**in mal varlığını 1909'da müsadere ettiği için arazi de o tarihten itibaren Türk hükümetinin malı olmuştu ve hükümdarın varislerinin talep hakları yoktu. Lozan Andlaşması'nın 60. maddesine göre Türkiye sınırları dışında kalan araziler o bölgelerde kurulan yeni devletlere ait sayılıyordu ve dolayısıyla **Muharraka Kebire** de hükümdarın varislerine değil, Filistin hükümetine aitti.

Gazze'nin kan gölüne dönmek üzere olduğu bu günlerde bundan yarım asır önce Avrupa gazetelerinin birinci sayfalarında yeralan bu davayı şimdi bende bulunan dosyasından özetleyeyim ve Filistin, Gazze ve Batı Şeria gibi yerlerin bize zannettiğimiz kadar uzak olmadığını hatırlatayım dedim.

Filistin’in son arabulucusu altı kurşunla öldürülmüştü

Yeniden kaynamaya başlayan Ortadoğu'da ne zaman bizimle ilgili bir arabuluculuk söylentisi çıkacak olsa, ben bölgenin tarihteki en meşhur arabulucusunun başına gelenleri hatırlıyorum: Altı kurşunla canından olan İsveçli Kont Bernadotte'nin akıbetini. İşte, bundan 52 yıl önce dünya gündemini aylar boyu meşgul eden bu suikastin ve katillerin zamanla başabakanlığa kadar yükselmelerinin öyküsü...

Ortadoğu'da gene kıyamet öncesinin hazırlıkları var. İnsanlar linç ediliyor, hatta linçten önce kurbanların karılarına cep telefonlarında **‘‘Şu anda kocanızı öldürmekle meşgulüz’’** deniyor. Sonra roketlerin ve tank paletlerinin gıcırtıları birbirine karışıyor ve bu arada gazetelerimizde **‘‘Araya girip savaşı önlememiz’’** gibisinden isteklerin geldiği yazılıyor.

Tarafların Türkiye'nin arabuluculuğunu ne derece ciddiyetle arzuladıklarını ben pek kestiremiyorum. Ama bölgede ne zaman bizimle ilgili bir arabuluculuk söylentisi çıksa hatırıma hemen Ortadoğu'nun en meşhur arabulucusunun, yani altı kurşunla canından olan **Kont Bernadotte'**nin akıbeti geliyor.

İşte, bundan 52 yıl önce dünyayı aylar boyu meşgul eden ama şimdilerde pek hatırlamadığımız hadisenin hazin öyküsü:

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Profesör Mur, konuyu Yafa'daki Kadastro Mahkemesi'ne götürdü. Bölge o yıllarda İngiliz himayesi altındaydı ve mahkemelerde İngiliz ve Arap hakimler beraberce karar veriyorlardı. İngiliz hakim Nemika Sultan' ı haklı bulurken Arap hakim "Gazze'nin Abdülhamid'le ne alákası var? Burası Filistin toprağıdır" deyip talebi reddetti ama İngiliz hakimin kararı üstün geldiği için aile davayı kazanmış sayıldı.

Hukuki mücadele, asıl bundan sonra başladı.

Filistin yönetimi, karara itiraz etti. Kudüs'teki yüksek mahkemeye giden Arap hakim "Türkiye'nin, Abdülhamid'e ait gayrımenkullere Meşrutiyet döneminde el koyarak devlete intikal ettirdiğini, dolayısıyla mirasçılarının bu araziler üzerinde hiçbir hakka sahip bulunmadıklarını" ileri sürüyordu. Yüksek mahkeme bu görüşü benimseyip İngiliz hakimin Abdülhamid torunları lehine verdiği kararı bozunca, Nemika Sultan' ın avukatları dosyayı Londra'ya, İngiliz Kraliyet Konseyi'nin hukuk dairesine götürdüler. Konsey Kudüs'teki yüksek mahkemenin kararını bozdu, davanın yeniden görülmesini isteyip dosyayı geri gönderdi ancak duruşmaların Yafa'da değil, Kudüs'te yapılmasına karar verdi.

Davaya Kudüs Kadastro Mahkemesi'nin hakimi Robert Windham baktı ve duruşmalar tam beş sene devam etti. Kararın Abdülhamid' in torunlarının lehine çıkacağının hissedildiği günlerde Dünya Siyonist Teşkilátı Nemika Sultan' la temasa geçti ve sulktan'ın araziyi kendilerine satmasını teklif etti. Nemika Sultan' ın ödemeyi kabul ederek hak iddia ettiği araziyi davanın neticesini beklemeden Siyonist Teşkilatı'na satması Abdülhamid' in ailesinin de Yahudi göçüne taraftar olduğunu gösterecek ve Teşkilat bu gelişmeyi uluslararası alanda kullanacaktı. Ancak Sultan teklifi reddetti ve davanın neticesini bekleyeceğini söyledi.

11 YIL SONRA ELDE VAR HİÇ

Hakim Windham, kararını 1946'nın 17 Ocak'ında açıkladı ve Abdülhamid varislerinin bütün ümitlerini yıktı: Gazze'deki arazi hakikaten Sultan Abdülhamid' e aitti. Ancak İttihad ve Terakki hükümeti Abdülhamid' in mal varlığını 1909'da müsadere ettiği için arazi de o tarihten itibaren Türk hükümetinin malı olmuştu ve hükümdarın varislerinin talep hakları yoktu. Lozan Andlaşması'nın 60. maddesine göre Türkiye sınırları dışında kalan araziler o bölgelerde kurulan yeni devletlere ait sayılıyordu ve dolayısıyla Muharraka Kebire de hükümdarın varislerine değil, Filistin hükümetine aitti.

Gazze'nin kan gölüne dönmek üzere olduğu bu günlerde bundan yarım asır önce Avrupa gazetelerinin birinci sayfalarında yeralan bu davayı şimdi bende bulunan dosyasından özetleyeyim ve Filistin, Gazze ve Batı Şeria gibi yerlerin bize zannettiğimiz kadar uzak olmadığını hatırlatayım dedim.

Filistin'in son arabulucusu altı kurşunla öldürülmüştü

Yeniden kaynamaya başlayan Ortadoğu'da ne zaman bizimle ilgili bir arabuluculuk söylentisi çıkacak olsa, ben bölgenin tarihteki en meşhur arabulucusunun başına gelenleri hatırlıyorum: Altı kurşunla canından olan İsveçli Kont Bernadotte'nin akıbetini. İşte, bundan 52 yıl önce dünya gündemini aylar boyu meşgul eden bu suikastin ve katillerin zamanla başabakanlığa kadar yükselmelerinin öyküsü...

Ortadoğu'da gene kıyamet öncesinin hazırlıkları var. İnsanlar linç ediliyor, hatta linçten önce kurbanların karılarına cep telefonlarında "Şu anda kocanızı öldürmekle meşgulüz" deniyor. Sonra roketlerin ve tank paletlerinin gıcırtıları birbirine karışıyor ve bu arada gazetelerimizde "Araya girip savaşı önlememiz" gibisinden isteklerin geldiği yazılıyor.

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KAN BEDELİ 54 bin 628 dolar

Derken savaş bitti, Filistin'deki İngiliz himayesi sona erdi ve Birleşmiş Milletler Teşkilátı Kont Bernadotte' u Arap ve İsrail arasında arabuluculuk etmesi için 1948 Mayıs'ında Kudüs'e gönderdi.

Taraflar arasındaki anlaşmazlıkların en önemlisi, bugünküyle aynıydı: Kudüs'ün statüsü ve geleceği. Kont' un hazırladığı plan, Birleşmiş Milletler tarafından resmi çözüm olarak kabul edildi. Buna göre Yahudilerle Araplar Kudüs'ün idaresinde tek başlarına söz sahibi olmayacaklar ve şehre milletlerarası bir kimlik verilecekti.

Plana ilk tepki İsrail'den, özellikle de Filistin hakimiyetine son vermeye çalışan siláhlı yeraltı örgütlerinden geldi. Kudüs'e uluslararası kimlik verilmesi planının mimarı Kont Bernadotte artık ilk hedefti. Hedefi vurma işi kısaca "LEHI" diye bilinen İsrail Özgürlük Savaşçıları "Lohamei Heruth Israel" in milislerine düştü. LEHI' nin üç genç lideri vardı, Kont' un ortadan kaldırılması fikrinin en ateşli savunucusu bu liderlerden biri olan Yitzak' a aitti ve hedef 1948'in 17 Eylül'ünde ortadan kaldırıldı.

Siláhlı altı milis, o sabah Kudüs'ün Yahudi kontrolündeki batı tarafında bir toplantıya giden Kont' un otomobilini ve refakatindeki diğer iki arabanın yolunu kesti. Dört kişi araçların tekerleklerine ateş açarken diğer ikisi ellerindeki otomatik Schmeisser tüfeklerininin kurşunlarını öndeki Chrysler marka

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Suikastçilikten başbakanlığa

Dünya kamuoyu ve bütün diplomatik çevreler ayağa kalkmışıtı. İsrail hemen tutuklamalara başladı, yüzlerce kişinin ifadesi alındı, birkaç gün sonra **''Barış delegesini öldürenlerin bulunduğu''** açıklandı ama aradan aylar geçti ve tutuklananların hiçbiri mahkemeye çıkartalmadı, yeterli delil olmadığı gerekçesiyle serbest bırakıldılar. İsrail, Birleşmiş Milletler'e **''Yeterli güvenlik tedbirlerini almadığı için Kont'un bir suikaste kurban gitmesinde devlet olarak hatası bulunduğunu''** bildirmekle ve ailesine verilmek üzere 54 bin 628 dolar ödemekle yetindi.

Hadisenin üzerinden seneler geçti, araya savaşlar, katliamlar ve hiç bitmeyecek mücadeleler girdi. **LEHI** de zamanla dağıldı, ismi İsrail'de bir **''kuruluş efsanesi''** halini aldı ama suikastten tam 35 sene sonra, 1983'te yeniden gündeme geldi: Örgütün liderlerinden olan ve **Kont Bernadotte'**nin ölüm kararını verenlerin başında gelen **Yitzak** bu defa İsrail'in başına geçmişti. Adı artık **Yitzak Şamir'**di ve İsrail'in başbakanıydı.

Kudüs'e barış içinde bir gelecek çizmeye çalışan **Kont Bernadotte'**nin hazin öyküsü, işte böyle. Ben, gazetelerde ne zaman **''Filistin meselesinde Türkiye'nin arabuluculuğuna ihtiyaç var''** şeklinde bir haber görsem hemen altı kurşunla canından olan **Kont'**u hatırlıyorum ama bir konuyu da düşünmeden edemiyorum: Ortadoğu'yu, özellikle de Filistin'i arabuluculuk yapabilecek derecede tanıyan, bilen ve oraların geçmişine tam manasıyla vakıf bulunan faal diplomatlara hakikaten sahip olup olmadığımızı...

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